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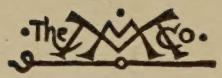
Pray thee who hast in hand my book or tome
to read it well — and then to send it home.

A FAITH FOR THE NEW GENERATION



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A FAITH FOR THE NEW GENERATION

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TO
CALMA HOWE GILKEY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FOREWORD

A few years ago I was invited to give a series of addresses on religion at one of our eastern colleges. In response to my inquiry the president of the student Christian Association sent me this description of the local religious problem:

> I wish I knew how to give you a realistic picture of the religious life of our college. Our Christian Association is strong in many ways and is rather popular, but those of us who have its real interests at heart have felt all along that it is missing out decidedly in giving any real religion to the college. You know what I mean. Not meetings, not altruistic work, not social service, but something vital and personal that will make a difference in the way the girls live. Our college is a place where we all have perfectly respectable ideals and where we all

> believe heartily in philanthropic work, but where Christ is almost unknown and a definitely personal religion simply doesn't exist. Most of the ministers who come to preach to us think that we are very skeptical, and they give us wonderfully intellectual sermons which interest the girls a lot but don't do them any good at all. The fact is we all want to believe something, but we don't know what it is, and no one seems able or ready to help us.

Of course these conditions are not limited to any one college, or to undergraduates as a group. Wherever we turn among educated people to-day we find this same religious uncertainty and this same honest desire to find a faith by which to live. Unless the essential convictions of Christianity can be restated in intellectually satisfying terms for the benefit of this large and ever-growing group, the Church will gradually and unhappily lose touch with great numbers of individuals, old and young, who need the Church scarcely less than the Church needs them.

This situation is further complicated by a fact which many parents and religious teachers seem to overlook. Some of the problems in religion which the young people of our time are most anxious to have solved are not discussed at all on the pages of the Bible. This is true, for example, of many questions relating to the existence of God and the possibility of the survival of individual personality after death. Students to-day are asking insistently whether there really is a God, whether the universe cannot be explained without Him. The men who wrote the Bible assumed God and made no effort to prove the validity of this assumption. Similarly the young people of our time are asking whether the human personality can continue to exist after the body on which it has apparently been so dependent breaks down in death. Most of the books of the Bible assume that there will be such a continued existence of the individual soul or spirit, but make no attempt to substantiate such a claim. Thus the conventional statement that, if young people would only "read the Bible

more" they would find their questions answered, falls pitifully wide of the mark. The reading and rereading of the Bible—even the Gospels—will not bring the answer to these questions, for the simple reason that the questions are neither faced nor answered in the Scripture.

The chapters in this book have grown out of the attempt, now continued for some ten years at various schools and colleges and student gatherings, to relate the essential Christian convictions to the view of the universe now held by the so-called "college group." The material presented here is designed primarily for young people and interested laymen rather than for experts in either science or theology. Hence I have taken the liberty of condensing many of the quotations and simplifying their somewhat technical language. I have also kept the pages free from elaborate footnotes, references, and bibliographies. Those who know the average student's wariness of cumbersome textbooks—particularly in philosophy and religion—will understand the rea-

son for these decisions. The reader will also realize of course that the views presented in this volume represent the individual convictions of the author rather than the official or semi-official pronouncements of any institution or religious group.

I must take this opportunity to thank those who have had a share, large or small, in the development of these chapters. Special mention should be made of many students at Amherst College whose keen questions have been a constant intellectual stimulus to their teacher. I also desire to thank Dr. William G. Ballantine, Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, and Professor James Everett Frame for their great kindness in reading the manuscript of this book and offering valuable suggestions.

JAMES GORDON GILKEY

Springfield, Massachusetts
May, 1926.

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A FAITH FOR THE NEW GENERATION

Chapter I

THE NEW SITUATION AND THE TASKS IT IMPOSES

I

Has anyone ever sketched for you the new pictures of the universe which science is now drawing? They are strangely different from the familiar ones of the past. We now know, to begin with, that our Earth is surrounded by limitless Space. Perhaps this illustration, devised by an ingenious American philosopher, will suggest what Space is. You are standing on a hilltop with an empty box in your hands. By some strange process the side of that box begin to move off steadily in the four directions—east, west, north, and south. Meantime the top of the box rises vertically in the sky, and the bottom of the box sinks down into the valley at your feet. The emptiness once

confined within the box, so to speak, begins to expand in every direction. Suppose the four sides of the box, the top, and the bottom continued to move apart steadily for a million years, and then suddenly vanished. The expanding emptiness would grow great enough to include everything near the Earth—sun, moon, stars, and all the rest—and then suddenly push out interminably in every direction. That is Space, extending everywhere and having no conceivable boundary of any kind. Suppose now, as the top of your box rose vertically in the sky, a bit of dirt became dislodged and started falling. Suppose it could dodge the gravitational pull of the Earth and all the other heavenly bodies. How far would it fall, and where would it stop? Of course it would fall forever, and stop nowhere. Where could it stop? Space has no bottom on which it could finally come to rest.

In such Space our universe is an insignificant thing. Astronomers now count between one and two thousand million stars about us, but even that collection must seem pitifully in-

significant in the blank emptiness on every side. Are there other universes like ours, drifting through other sections of Space? Apparently there are. Modern astronomy has located the outposts of some of these other universes and given these celestial bodies the name "fixed stars." Perhaps the most familiar fixed star is Alpha Centauri. How far away is it? Light from the sun reaches us in about eight minutes, traveling all the time at the inconceivable rate of 186,000 miles per second. Light from Alpha Centauri needs four years for its journey to the Earth. But even that distance now begins to seem small on the scale of Space. The Harvard Observatory reports the recent discovery of another universe so far beyond Alpha Centauri that these first fixed stars, once thought incredibly distant, now seem like back-door neighbors. How far away is the new universe? Light from the sun reaches us in about eight minutes. Light from Alpha Centauri needs four years. Light from the new universe has apparently been on its way for something like a million

years. Is there anything on the other side of the new universe? There may well be more distant universes glittering there, waiting to be discovered. Here is the first of the new pictures science is drawing of the world we live in. As we study a picture like this, two questions force themselves insistently on our minds. Where did these universes come from? What is the meaning of their existence?

II

But this is only the beginning of the riddle of Life. Suppose we turn from Space to Time. How old is this Earth on which we find ourselves? Dr. John Lightfoot, Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, made his famous announcement some three centuries ago. "Heaven and Earth, center and circumference, were created all together in the same instant of time. This work took place, and man was created by the Trinity, on October 23rd, 4004 B.C., at about nine o'clock in the morning." How quaint those words seem to the archaeologists of to-day! Scientific in-

vestigation has carried our definite historical records back to about 5000 B.C. We have unearthed in Mesopotamia traces of civilizations that reach back to 7000 B.C. or possibly earlier. Before that time there seems to have been a period of from 25,000 to 50,000 years during which human beings something like ourselves existed on the Earth. Before that time there were uncounted centuries of subhuman evolution. The present guesses as to the age of our Earth range all the way from 400,000 to 1,600,000,000 years. Further study, of course, may show that the Earth is even older than that.

But the strangest element in the Time-process is this. For the greater portion of the Earth's long history nothing of great importance—judged by our human standards—seems to have happened. Then, at a comparatively recent date, human life emerged and civilization developed with amazing speed. Professor Robinson of Columbia has worked out an ingenious illustration which suggests the newness of human life as we know it to-day:

> Suppose we could compress the entire history of mankind into a brief span of fifty years. Forty-nine of the fifty would have been spent in developing life to such a point that primitive men could till the soil, domesticate the animals, and weave rough garments for themselves. Halfway through the final year writing would have been invented. Eight weeks ago Jesus would have been born. The printing-press would have appeared week before last, and the steam-engine six days ago. Yesterday electrical science would have begun, and an hour ago an airplane would have made its first uncertain flight.[1]

There is cosmic history reduced to a scale the average person can understand. Existence may have been something of a puzzle in the days when Dr. Lightfoot was advancing his comfortable theory that everything started in full working-order in 4004 B.C. But what a baffling riddle existence is to-day when archaeology uncovers these incredibly long periods

[1] James Harvey Robinson, *The Mind in the Making.*

of evolution, and history reveals the fact that human beings are the newest kind of newcomers on a surprisingly old Earth! No wonder an English philosopher confesses in uncertainty, "One-fourth of Life is intelligible, three-fourths is unintelligible. Our earliest duty is to cultivate the habit of not trying to look around the corner."

Suppose we follow the Englishman's advice, leave Space and Time to themselves, and focus our attention on the experiences of the present moment on our little Earth. Even then can we understand what is going on? "While I talk and the flies buzz in this room, a sea-gull catches a fish at the mouth of the Amazon, a tree falls in the Adirondack wilderness, a man sneezes in Germany, a horse dies in Tartary, and twins are born in France. What does it all mean, anyway?" William James had phrased with characteristic vividness the question which even the most unreflective person wants answered. What meaning—if any—is there in our hourly existence and the hourly existence of our Earth? Are all these jumbled

occurrences parts of a consistent and intelligible purpose, or are they as fortuitous and meaningless as the movement of dust-particles drifting here and there in a ray of sunshine?

Anyone who understands the effort of modern science realizes that science does not attempt to answer these ultimate questions. Science explains with marvelous ingenuity and apparent finality the mechanics of everyday events. It has told us more than the men of the past ever knew about the sea-gull and the fish, the falling tree, the dying horse, and the new-born twins. But science leaves unanswered the deeper questions about the ultimate origin and the true meaning of life. The men and women of our time, puzzled by their new glimpses of Space and Time and Experience, ask eagerly, "What does it all mean? Is there any thread of purpose running through the apparently incoherent details of existence?" Science answers frankly, "We do not pretend to say. We can tell you how the processes of life go on. We cannot tell you why or how

they started, and what—if anything—they are trying to accomplish."

This is where religion should help us. In the past it tried to discover the source and the meaning of life. Then it tried to show men how to live effectively. These are the two things religion ought to do to-day.

III

This situation lays an obvious responsibility on those who would make the Christian interpretation of life and the Christian way of living dominant in our new world. We must adapt the Christian teaching of the past to the new intellectual environment of the present. In the process we must formulate a new and characteristically Christian interpretation of life which the educated men and women of our time can accept, and from which they can draw the courage and inspiration they need for steady and effective living.

Such a process of adaptation and restatement will mean, of course, that some of the ideas of the Christianity of the past must be

reverently but courageously laid aside. We cannot, for example, carry over into our new world of scientific knowledge the belief held by many of the Christians of Dr. Lightfoot's day —that the universe was, at a relatively recent date, suddenly and miraculously created in full working-order. Neither can we accept the idea, so common in mediaeval Christianity, that God might be prevailed upon to interrupt arbitrarily the course of Nature for the benefit of celestial or earthly favorites. We certainly cannot share the conviction of primitive men that God reveals himself to human beings in abnormal psychological experiences such as dreams, trances, visions, and extreme "mystic states." These ideas, undoubtedly part and parcel of much of the religion and much of the Christianity of the past, we admittedly leave behind. We abandon these ancient beliefs for the same reason that we abandon the old notion that the earth is flat. Such convictions no longer fit in with the array of other facts definitely established as true.

But while we leave behind these beliefs, we

cling firmly to the essential convictions of Christian faith. We keep our belief in a "Power not ourselves, making for righteousness," a Spiritual Reality behind all life known to us as the God and Father of Jesus Christ. We keep our faith in Jesus' way of living, a way characterized by unwavering trust in God and unfaltering love toward men. We keep our conviction that those who live day by day at their best, making the most of themselves in their own way for the sake of others, will find here and now the durable satisfactions of life, and after the insignificant episode of death will find another chance to live and love, work and grow. Best of all, we keep our belief that there are sources of surplus power in ourselves and in the Living God, spiritual energies on which embattled men and women can draw in times of need, and from which they can gain the extra strength and extra moral impetus they need for victorious living. Here is our faith, a faith that unites us with the Christians of all the centuries and with Jesus Christ Himself.

Suppose we fail to make some such evaluation and restatement of the Christian convictions that have come down from the past. What will happen? Professor Lake points out the danger involved in our present situation:

> I am unable to conceal my fear lest the churches of our time should leave their intellectual house-cleaning too late, and as a result the generation now growing up should turn its back on all organized forms of Christianity. The result of that situation would be, I think, the emergence of a new form of religion which might not call itself Christian at all. I am daily more convinced that this may happen, and words cannot express my regret. No one who has been brought up in the Church can fail to realize how much will be lost if there is a definite break in our religious development.[2]

Face to face with such alternatives, how much wiser it is for us to change the earthen vessels in which the treasure of Christian faith has

[2] Kirsopp Lake, *The Religion of Yesterday and To-morrow.*

been kept, than to see the new generation reject with impatience both the outworn vessel and the priceless inheritance within!

IV

But our task is not only to adjust Christian teaching to the new intellectual environment. We must also adapt the organized Church to the new social situation.

Recently one of our magazine writers gave this impressive summary of the resources of the modern American Church:

> Whenever I think of the Church in this country, I try to remember that there are no less than 228,000 churches in the United States, that there are 135,000 ministers and priests and rabbis in charge of congregations, that there are some 21,000,000 Sunday School pupils, and that there are 42,000,000 actual church members beside several million other adherents who have been trained in the Church's tradition and are in general sympathy with its program. The possibilities of

this vast institution, once aroused and acting with some degree of unity, are obviously beyond computation.

Of course this essayist lumped together Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish groups to form these impressive totals. But even if we consider Protestantism alone, or study the available resources of the Protestant churches in a single community, we see possibilities of effectiveness that startle the imagination.

In 1922 a group of experts decided to make an intensive study of the Protestant situation in a typical American city of approximately 150,000 people. Springfield, Massachusetts, was chosen, and for the first time in history all the resources of scientific investigation were applied to the task of finding the exact status of Protestantism in a city of average size. What did the survey—carried on by outsiders—reveal? There were 43 regularly organized Protestant churches operating in the city. The total value of their property, exempt from all taxation, ran into the millions. Toward the support of these Protestant churches the peo-

ple of the city contributed some $350,000 per year. It was significant that 27 major philanthropies of Springfield, united in a local Community Chest, received only about $300,000 annually for their seven-days-a-week program. Between 1900 and 1920 Springfield citizens invested well over $1,000,000 in the support of the dozen Congregational churches of the city. This sum represents only the money given for running expenses. Sums given for benevolence and major building projects are not included. Most significant of all, a large group of volunteer workers gave to these Protestant churches year after year an amount of time and strength and effort that escaped all tabulation.[3] This situation is not peculiar to any one American city. It is characteristic of all our communities, large and small. No wonder that modern essayists, even those who are out of sympathy with organized religion, admit that the possibilities of the American Church are literally beyond computation.

[3] H. Paul Douglass, *The Springfield Church Survey.*

But at this point in their development our Protestant churches find themselves confronted with a difficult problem. Most of them were located, built, and organized for work in an age strangely different from our own. Their geographical locations and their programs are, in many instances at least, curiously unsuited to the new conditions of modern life. Consider, for example, the way in which the advent of the automobile has affected the ecclesiastical situation. Before 1900, getting people to and from church was a real problem. In the case of small children the difficulties were particularly obvious and trying. After a long and unhappy experience the Church settled down to the theory that it was useless to expect people to travel very far to attend religious gatherings, and that therefore separate churches must be built here and there throughout the community. Efforts were thus made to provide churches for the "unchurched sections," even though many of these churches were necessarily small in membership and weak in financial resources. When there was a church

in every part of the community, no one could offer the difficulties of travel as an excuse for staying away from the Sunday service or keeping the children home from Sunday School. The situation to-day? Some 18,000,000 automobiles are jostling each other on American highways, and the old theory that people cannot reach a centrally located church (if they want to) is suddenly exploded. What difference does another half-mile make when the family is riding to church in the new car?

Or consider the way in which the community itself is changing. During the last few decades we have seen, in unnumbered villages, towns, and cities, a social transformation that our grandparents would have deemed impossible. In 1841 the *New York Herald* published this description of a famous beauty-spot just across the Hudson—"beautiful, rosy Hoboken" one admirer called the place. "This charming summer resort is now in full bloom and beauty. By all means take a walk over to Hoboken once or twice a week if you love health and happiness. The proprietors of the

Hoboken House are spirited yet gentlemanly, and their House is one of the most excellent in this vicinity. Every species of refreshment or luxury can be obtained there, and the recreations and amusements are endless. The bathing-houses, the gymnasium, the shady arbors, the swings, the beautiful collection of natural curiosities (among which are the musk-kangaroo, the anaconda, the great boa-constrictor, etc., etc., all under the care of an intelligent and polite keeper) are all that the heart of mortal could wish." "Beautiful, rosy, Hoboken. . . ." What would that enthusiast think if he could visit the same spot to-day, and find it covered with factories, tenements, and railroad terminals?

V

Such changes in the Church's social environment make plain the second task devolving upon us. There is the same imperative need for readjustment in the Church's organization and program that there is in the Church's teaching. Those who hope to see the Christian

tradition dominant in the life of the new America must create a new type of Church as well as formulate a new statement of religious belief. Only as this is done, can the Church as an organization keep its position of influence in the emerging communities of tomorrow.

Such a reorganization of the existing Church will involve, of course, decades of patient effort and experiment. But the general lines along which that effort and experiment must be made are already beginning to be clear. We certainly must free organized Christianity from the narrow and intolerant denominationalism which has hindered its efforts so tragically in the past. We must teach the Church to spend its energy spreading the spirit of Jesus Christ in the community and rebuilding social institutions after His mind and heart. We must equip the Church to carry on a program of practical philanthropy designed to meet concrete local needs, and carefully interrelated with the program of the secular welfare agencies already at work in the same field.

We must remind the Church constantly that there are starved souls as well as starved bodies, and we must make sure that the new churches of to-morrow will be as effective in bringing men new courage, new hope, and a new sense of the nearness and the availability of God as they will be in giving the underprivileged children of the community new opportunities for recreation, and the throng of lonely migrants in apartment houses new chances to make friends. In the midst of all these efforts —new and old—we must continue and make still more effective the Church's century-old work of repairing broken and defeated personalities. When all is said, most men and women—even the best—are in the grip of impulses and habits from which they desperately crave release. Fear and worry, sin and selfishness, are still real problems in human life. Humanity, with its tragic handicap of inherited animal instinct, still needs to be saved. In the past the Church has opened to unnumbered people the way of life. The Church still has that work to do.

VI

Suppose some such process of adaptation is finally carried through. Suppose in the years ahead the essential Christian convictions are rephrased in the language and the thought-forms of our time, and the Church is fitted to work effectively in the new social environment. Will Christianity still make an appeal? Or is the new generation, growing to maturity in a materialistic atmosphere, losing interest in religion?

Some time ago one of my students gave me this unusual bit of spiritual autobiography:

> When I entered college I counted myself a Christian. I believed in God, in Jesus Christ, in all the miracles, and in the Bible as the infallible Word of God. But before long I met a boy who was a sincere atheist. His questions set me thinking, and since then I have passed through many stages of belief and doubt. Finally I became an agnostic, or rather almost an agnostic. When I speculated about God and weighed the different

arguments for and against His existence, there seemed little to choose between them. But always, way down in my heart, there was something which kept tipping the scales in favor of God. Just what it was I don't know. Last summer I had an experience that finally made me pretty sure of God. Three of us had been riding on horseback for hours along a steep and rather dangerous trail in the Rockies. We were trying to find a lake of which the cowboys had told us a great deal. Finally, late in the afternoon, after we had been making our way through a forest of giant yellow pines and up a steep mountain trail, we turned a sharp corner and there was the lake unexpectedly before us. We pulled up our horses and stared at the blue water for a long time in silence. Then one of the boys said in a low whisper, "God." It wasn't an oath. It was the most appropriate word I could imagine. At times like that, theological wrangles and scientific quandaries seem

pretty small and worthless. There really isn't any question about God. We have to believe in Him. Something has certainly shifted the balance for me. I guess I'm sure of God now, after all.

We need not fear that religion may die. Our hearts reach out too insistently for God. His love reaches out too eagerly for us. As long as God and men endure, they will seek and find each other.

Chapter II

A MODERN CONCEPTION OF GOD

I

Professor J. Arthur Thomson, one of the leading biologists of Scotland, has recently published an essay entitled "Scientific Snapshots." [1] Here are his three pictures of the primeval world. He calls the first "The Young Earth:"

> As far as the eye could reach, a monotonous, smoking desert. Here and there a sluggish stream of molten rock crawls out of a crack, hardening and blistering as it cools. No signs of life, nor any sounds except crackling and hissing noises, and now and then a dull explosion like a bomb. No sun by day, nor moon by night, nor any stars—only a thick curtain of cloud over everything. That was the surface of the cooling Earth, the

[1] J. Arthur Thomson, *Science, Old and New.*

future home of mankind, about 861 million years ago.

The second snapshot, representing conditions many million years later, is called "The Dawn of Life":

> A universal ocean without continents or islands, but teeming with microscopic creatures part way between plants and animals. Some of them grew and multiplied by day and then died at night, for their resources were very slender. Untold ages passed, the floor of the sea buckled, and great continents formed, with deeps between. In the inshore waters, shallow enough to be well-lighted, some of these early forms of life anchored themselves and developed into the first sea-weeds. In the course of time a new form of life came out of the sea-weeds—minute predatory creatures that fed on fragments of the plants. These were the first animals, about four hundred million years ago.

The final picture, bringing us millions of

years nearer the present, is called "The First Bird":

> A strange creature a few inches high is sprinting along the arid ground. It is a long-legged biped, very spare and lightly built. It resembles a bird in its sharply marked-off head, its supple neck, and its springy legs. It is like a lizard in its scales, its teeth, and its tail. Its forelimbs bear a slight web like scales partly shredded up, and it flaps them as it runs. Occasionally it takes a long, running leap, and skims a little way over the ground. When a big reptile makes a clumsy lunge at it, it leaps in terror onto a low-growing tree and disappears among the branches. That was the first bird, perhaps fifty million years ago.

Of course the details of these pictures are imaginary. But the main outlines are accepted by modern science as presumably true.

Suppose, now, we study that third picture more closely. The things we first notice in it are inanimate objects—rocks, stones, sand-

dunes, and the near-by water. Where did they come from in the first place? We know that our present land-forms go back to them, and that they in turn can be traced back through purely mechanical changes to the formations that emerged on the cooling Earth millions of years earlier. But what was their ultimate origin? Where did Matter come from in the beginning? Scientists do not pretend to answer that question. They admit it is the first riddle of the universe. To say that the primeval Earth was the product of cooling gases, or that it represented the fortuitous cohesion of masses of drifting star-dust, is an obvious evasion of the real problem. Where did the cooling gases come from? What was the ultimate origin of the masses of drifting star-dust? We may as well admit that our present scientific knowledge stops at this point.

But there is something in that third snapshot beside inanimate objects. The first bird is there, sprinting along the arid ground. When all is said, that bird seems fundamentally different from the lifeless objects on every side.

That bird is conscious, active, busy forming purposes and putting them clumsily into action. That bird has within himself the strange but unmistakable quality we call Life. Where did Life come from? We can trace the life of to-day back to those primitive animal forms, and behind them to the first living creatures emerging in the sea-weeds of the primeval ocean. But where did the first spark of Life come from? What was its ultimate source? There is a second question science finds itself unable to answer. The ultimate origin of Life is quite as much of a mystery as the ultimate origin of Matter. You say that Life probably developed out of lifeless Matter by complex chemical processes, and that this theory will solve one of the two riddles? But the theory of the mechanical or chemical origin of Life is now viewed with increasing skepticism by the ablest scientists of to-day. Dr. Henderson, professor of biochemistry at Harvard, writes:

> I know of no biological chemist to whom the spontaneous or mechanistic origin of a living cell is scientifically imaginable,

though all of us believe that once the cells are formed they do exist and operate as mechanisms in a mechanical universe. Biochemists are more than ever unable to conceive how a gradual evolution of organic Life from inorganic Matter could be possible. Liebig was once asked if he believed that a flower could be made to grow by chemical forces. He replied, "I would more readily believe that a book on chemistry could be made to develop out of dead Matter." Thus the chemist puts his mind at rest regarding the origin of Life in the same way the physicist puts his mind at rest regarding the origin of Matter—by turning his back on the whole problem.[1]

Two obvious realities in our universe, Matter and Life. The ultimate origin of each a mystery. Space, Time, Matter, Life—all familiar, and yet all baffling.

[1] L. J. Henderson, *The Fitness of the Environment.*

II

In such a universe where does God come in? Perhaps an analogy will make our modern conception clear. You are standing on a vacant lot, watching the erection of a new house. Brick and stone and lumber are piled in confusion about you, and gangs of workmen are busy shaping that formless material into the definitely planned structure of the new dwelling. Of course all the different operations you see going on can be studied as strictly mechanical processes. There is a definite and a fairly obvious cause for every event that takes place, and engineers who knew all the laws of mechanics could doubtless foretell the exact developments presently to occur. The contraction of certain muscles in a carpenter's arm, for example, imparts just so much energy to the head of his hammer and drives his nail just so far through a particular timber. The expansive force of the steam in the cylinder of an engine pushes a shovel just so far through the sand and excavates a certain predetermined amount of material. The upward

thrust of interlocking beams meets the downward thrust of the heavy roof, and promises to hold a given number of slates securely in the air. From one point of view the building of the house is a purely mechanical process. A thoughtless observer might say that no other factor entered in.

But anyone who follows the erection of the house carefully will realize that there is a second factor involved. After all, the carpenters are not cutting their timbers and driving their nails in fortuitous fashion. The steam-shovel is not excavating anywhere on the premises. The materials out of which the house is being built were selected and gathered, not picked up hastily from the nearby field. Something intangible and immaterial yet indubitably real is guiding all the different mechanical processes and leading them to produce a particular dwelling rather than a chaotic heap. What is this intangible and immaterial factor in the building process? It is, of course, the purpose of the architect. That purpose is quite as real and important an element in the

total situation as the piles of building material or the energy of men and machines. When, in such a situation, we note that coherent procedures are being followed and a clearly defined and inter-related structure is emerging from formless materials, we inevitably infer that some kind of a purpose is operating in and through the building-process. Behind that purpose we infer, with equal inevitability, the mind of an architect. There might be emerging chaos without a directive intelligence. There could hardly be emerging structure.

As we turn from the half-built house to the vast and ever-growing universe in which we find ourselves, we see there too evidences of orderliness and emerging structure. Life does not develop in haphazard and incoherent ways. Rather it moves along particular paths and heads toward well-defined goals. History is not the record of a meaningless succession of unrelated events, but the story of an unfolding and apparently consistent purpose.

Out of a primitive chaos where physical forces snarled at each other in unrelieved

antagonism, where as yet no man had arisen to love truth and serve righteousness, something has brought us to a time when—for all our evil—there are gentle mothers and music and the laughter of children at play. Something has brought us to a time when there are men who love honor and who for Christ's sake lay down their lives in the service of their brethren. Something has brought us to a time when there are homes in every obscure street where fortitude and devotion are splendidly exhibited. Out of a primitive chaos where an observer (could there have been one) would have seen no slightest promise of spiritual achievement, something has brought us the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, brought us great character and growing achievements in social righteousness. Something has been at work here beside blind Energy and inert Matter.[3]

If the emergence of the definite structure

[3] Harry Emerson Fosdick.

we call a house presupposes the purpose and the mind of an architect behind the process, does not the emergence of a definitely organized universe with a consistent aim imply a purpose and a Directive Intelligence at the heart of things?

But we note more than the fact that a definite structure and not a chaos is emerging in the life-process. We note also that the component parts of the great structure and of the minor structures within it fit together with singular intricacy and effectiveness. Consider this description, recently given by Professor Thomson, of the innumerable cells that make up the human body.

> In the portion of the brain which controls the higher intellectual processes, the nerve-cells form a small mass of gray matter which weighs no more than half an ounce. Yet in that mass there are some nine thousand million separate cells, each one an intricate living unit. Each cell is comparable to a busy telephone exchange, constantly putting one part of the body in

touch with another. We glibly say "each cell," and yet each cell is a world in itself. The microscopic study of some of the cells of the human body reveals a motley multitude of jostling particles suspended in a fluid, and yet so divided that different chemical processes can actually go on side by side and at the same time without interfering with each other. In the center of the cell-substance floats the so-called nucleus, another world in itself. Inside its membrane there are the chromosomes, usually definite in number for each species. Thus the number for the human species is probably 48. Innumerable cells like these form the stones and mortar out of which our house of life is built. Yet that is too static a metaphor for them, for each one is thoroughly alive. These cells are not witch's cauldrons. Rather, each one is an orderly laboratory in which there constantly take place oxidations and reductions, hydrations and condensations, upbuilding and down-breaking changes.

> These chemical reactions take place with great speed, and yet with extraordinary orderliness. The living human body thus formed by these innumerable cells is undergoing ceaseless change and is completely renewed at intervals of every few years. Yet in spite of this perennial change, the human body retains a relatively constant form through days, months, and even decades.[4]

God a "self-induced delusion of pious minds?" Look at the next half-finished building you see. Do not the facts of orderliness, consistent purpose, and inter-related structure imply a plan behind the building process? Does not that plan point back to a mind capable of conceiving it? There is our argument for the reality of God. We believe He is the Mind and the Power behind the universe, the ultimate source of that consistent purpose which is working itself out in the vast process of evolution.

How do we picture God's activity at the

[4] J. Arthur Thomson, *Science and Religion.*

beginning of things? We believe that God, working in the midst of Space and Time, created Matter and organized it into the system of universes which science is now revealing. When our inorganic Earth, a tiny part of one of those universes, reached a certain stage of development, God put into it the first sparks of Life. Ever since, He has been sending more and more Life into our growing world, just as the sun radiates fresh light-rays every new instant of time. You say this answer to the riddle of existence is "only a guess?" But any answer is only a guess. And when all is said, where can you find another answer as convincing as the religious one?

III

This particular answer to the riddle of existence gives us a satisfying explanation of a number of situations that would otherwise seem baffling at best. Consider, for example, the fact that our Earth seems to have been fitted in advance for the living creatures which, at our end of the Time-process, have finally

emerged upon it. Professor Henderson of Harvard, whom we have already quoted, ventures these interesting opinions about conditions on the primeval Earth:

> Before any life appeared upon the Earth, there existed in the Earth and in its surrounding atmosphere large quantities of oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon, together with their compounds, water and carbonic acid. These are precisely the elements which are best fitted to favor the appearance of life as we know it. There is no known explanation why these particular elements rather than any others were present in the primeval Earth and its atmosphere. There is not one chance in countless millions of millions that they should, by sheer coincidence, happen to occur simultaneously in the atmosphere of a new planet like the primeval Earth. Similarly, there is just as little likelihood that these elements and their compounds should be, by sheer coincidence, so uniquely favorable to the forms of organic life

which were to emerge ages later. These adjustments cannot be mere accidents. There must be a reason for them.[5]

In developing this theory of the fitness of the environment, Professor Henderson adduces one bit of evidence which has doubtless caught the attention of us all. When water is cooled to the freezing point, it expands rather than contracts. The usual procedure is exactly opposite. Have you ever considered what the ultimate results would have been had water followed the normal course and contracted on cooling? Professor Henderson continues:

> In that case, the cold water in lakes and streams and oceans would, on cooling, keep sinking to the bottom and freeze there. The ice thus formed could never melt because the warm water would stay on the surface and hold it down. Thus year after year in the cold regions the ice at the bottom of every body of water would grow steadily thicker, freezing

[5] L. J. Henderson, *The Fitness of the Environment.*

> deeper each winter and remaining unmelted through the summer. Finally the entire body of water would change to solid ice. Under such circumstances the disadvantage for all forms of life would be enormous, and life on the Earth would be proportionately restricted. As things are, when water is cooled it rises to the top and ice forms on the surface rather than at the bottom. This layer of surface-ice protects the warmer water below, and the main body of the water is thus kept from freezing. In the spring the first warm days melt this thin surface-ice, and at the first possible moment it vanishes utterly.[6]

How do we explain facts like these? We cannot believe that such adjustments of means to end are the result of coincidence. Rather, we believe that God, the Mind and the Power behind the universe, conceived these adjustments long before our Earth took form, and then deliberately initiated the evolution of an Earth organized along these lines rather than

[6] *Ibid.*

along any others. Once the pattern was set, the slow and mechanical development of our Earth proceded automatically along the predetermined lines. God could, like the architect who planned the house and initiated an orderly construction-process, leave the building operations to follow their own mechanical course. In the end the particular Earth God desired would emerge into existence.

Here also is a satisfying explanation of the fact that so many of the different forms of life seem equipped in advance for the precise demands existence is destined to make upon them. Consider, for example, the feathers on a bird's wing. They seem unimpressive enough, but biologists remind us that if we examine them carefully with reference to the bird's needs, they reveal themselves as marvels of intricate and purposeful creation. Professor Thomson writes:

> A bird's feather is one of the most perfect structures in the world. On a single pinion plucked from the wing of an eagle we can count nearly a million inter-related

parts. Quill and shaft, two rows of barbs on each shaft, two rows of barbules on each barb, and numerous barbicels on the barbules. All together they form a sail which strikes the wind firmly yet elastically, not letting the air get through the web and still not permitting itself to be broken. This structure of the feather means that it adds little to the bird's weight, and yet it increases enormously his ability to row in the air. As long as the feather grows it is fed. When the constitutionally ordained limit for its growth is reached, it stops growing; but even then it does not die and drop off too quickly. By the time it has gradually moulted off, a new feather is ready to take its place—in the case of many birds just in time for the long migratory journey, when frayed feathers would be dangerous. And this is only the beginning of the feather's marvels. A feather is difficult to wet—an obvious advantage in the case of a creature exposed to all sorts of

weather. The feathers form a non-conducting robe around the bird's body which conserves with peculiar effectiveness the precious animal-heat within. Often this robe of feathers is colored in such a way that it gives its possessor a cloak of invisibility. Even the fallen feathers form the best kind of a quilt for the new generation, snug and warm in a nest. Remember too that when a bird rows his way through the air, the feathers tilt back automatically as the wings are raised for the new stroke. Oarsmen have borrowed the trick and call it "feathering" the oars. It economizes a great deal of energy for the bird in the air and for the imitator in the boat below.[7]

How did the feathers get these marvelous qualities? Scientists point out that millions of years were required to change, by slow and almost imperceptible modifications, the dried scale on the forelimb of the first bird into the marvelous pinion on the wing of its distant de-

[7] J. Arthur Thomson, *Science and Religion.*

scendant. Granted that during those years the process of perfecting the feather went on automatically as a result of constantly emerging variations and the ruthless elimination of the less fit forms. Granted that, through mechanical processes like these, the feather finally "made itself." It is one thing to explain the mechanics of a process, and another to explain how the process happened to start and how it happened to fit in with other processes so that all together they ultimately produced a coherent working-unit rather than a multitude of unrelated parts. We believe that behind the evolution of the bird's wing is the deliberate purpose of God. God who conceived in advance what a perfect feather might be, started the age-long process of growth, organized this process in such a way that it would eventually produce the desired result, inter-related this process with other processes so that the perfect feather which finally crept into existence would fit in with other parts of the bird's organism perfecting themselves in a similar way, and who saw to it that feather

and bird would have their place in an infinitely vast but consistent and essentially purposeful scheme-of-things. You say situations like these can be explained on the basis of original chance, the fortuitous incidence of blind Energy on inert Matter, and the steady elimination of everything unfit? Look at the next vacant lot you pass. Would you say that a finely built and fully equipped house could emerge there as the result of a distant lumber yard, a succession of gales, and the ruthless elimination of every timber and bit of trim blown against the building but not fitting into place? Would you say that such a house might appear—by sheer chance—even if the wind blew steadily for millions of years from the lumber yard toward the vacant lot? You might defend that theory valiantly, but in a world like ours you would make few converts to it. The more perfect the design of the house, the more intricate the structure, and the more careful the inter-relationship of the component parts, the surer most people would be that at some time an architect-builder had

had something to do with the building-process.

IV

At this point an old question rises in human minds. If our Earth is really God's creation, why is there so much undeserved suffering in it? Somewhere in Europe or Asia a disease germ so elusive that even yet it has not been trapped creeps into existence, and presently the influenza epidemic sweeps away thousands of innocent lives. Far below the surface of the Earth a relentless sequence of geological developments begins, and presently the most populous sections of Japan are devastated by an earthquake. Human lives, infinitely sensitive to pain, are tortured by undeserved disaster and torn apart by untimely death. Why? If God made the world, where did these tragic elements come from?

The most convincing answer we can give to this question is that these tragedies represent the risks God took when He made the particular world He did.

Perhaps a familiar analogy will make our point clear. Here is a father who wants to develop his son's latent ability and strengthen his character. He wants to teach his boy to face hard problems and solve them, meet temptations and master them, encounter hardship and finally gain the victory over it. He wants to see that boy make the difficult transition from dependent and relatively helpless immaturity to independent and resourceful manhood. How can the father achieve these ends? He sends his boy away to college, literally forcing him into a new and strange and difficult environment. Of course this college experience involves obvious risks. The boy may find himself confronted with intellectual problems he cannot answer, and actually graduate from college more confused in his thinking than he was when he left home. He may encounter temptations which will wreck his character rather than strengthen it. He may meet difficulties so great that he will actually break down in the effort to master them. The years in college involve tragic

risks, and every college community has its unhappy stories of young people who, meeting the stress and strain of college life, finally go down in ignominious defeat. Does all this mean that the father wants the boy to wreck his life or make tragic blunders as he "finds himself" during the college years? Of course not. The blunders and the hardships are a source of pain for the father as well as for the son, but the father knows that these are the risks which must be faced and faced bravely. Only in some such way as this can the boy pass from weak childhood to strong and self-reliant maturity.

As far as we can judge, God's purpose in this strange existence of ours is to develop and perfect personalities. We reach this conclusion because the whole system of evolution seems to lead up to the creation of human beings. They seem to be the goal toward which the age-long process moves, the masterpieces which our universe finally succeeds in producing. Suppose this is the clue to the riddle

of existence. Suppose God's purpose is the creation and perfection of personalities. What kind of a world was needed for the fulfillment of such a purpose?

It was obviously a world of law, a world in which certain actions would invariably be followed by certain consequences. Only in such a rigid and predictable world could personalities grow and perfect themselves through ordered effort. The world also had to be one of slow growth rather than sudden transformation, one of moral freedom rather than predetermined and inevitable goodness, one of social relationships rather than isolation. Since personalities were to live and toil and achieve in a world of Matter, they also had to function through something material, a physical body. Here was the particular world suited to develop human power and character. Here was the world God had to create once He embarked on the venture of perfecting personalities like ours.

But of course such a world was crammed

with risks. A world of law meant that there would be no sudden and arbitrary changes of procedure, no shifts of sequence, even in crucial instances and for the benefit of highly important individuals. A world of growth meant that it would be a long, slow, difficult task for personalities to climb from one level to the next, and that the personalities which succeeded in rising would be constantly handicapped and even imperiled by those that lagged behind. A world of freedom meant that some personalities, stupidly choosing a slight and immediate benefit in preference to a greater but more distant one, might misuse their power of choice and bring ultimate disaster on themselves and others. A world of social relationships meant that the sin and suffering of one group might be transferred to another group, innocent though the second might be. And a world in which the human spirit works through a physical body? That meant a world of death and all the suffering death entails. All these risks were involved when God made the kind of a world suited to

develop and perfect personality. You ask why God decided to have personalities develop slowly, rather than create them perfect from the start? No one can answer that question. We can only point to the particular world we find ourselves in, and say that God chose to work in this way rather than in any other.

What, then, is God's attitude when tragedy overtakes a human life? Think of the father who sends his son to college in the hope that the hard experience will develop self-reliance and rugged character in the boy. The father certainly does not want his boy to suffer or make tragic blunders. The father does everything love can do to help his son avoid difficulties. If disasters materialize, the father suffers as keenly as the boy. Yet the father knows all the time that some such trying experience is the only road that will lead his son from childhood to maturity. God want us to suffer? God look on indifferently when we pass through hours of pain? "In all their sorrow He was afflicted"—how clearly that

prophet of long ago sensed God's unfailing interest, God's eagerness to help, God's anguish when His children fail! Pain and disappointment, sin and injustice and death, tragic circumstance and undeserved bereavement are the risks God and men have to take in a world designed to perfect personality. But over and over again that world, cruel though it often seems, has shown its power to produce men and women of courage and intelligence, patience and sympathy and sacrificial love. Such personalities are worth the eternity of effort God has put into them. They deserve the eternity of rediscovered friendship and widening opportunity He opens ahead.

Chapter III

GETTING GOD'S HELP IN DAILY LIFE

I

In the Royal Gallery of Painting at Naples you will find a curious mediaeval picture which shows the measures that were taken to enlist God's help when the city was devastated by the plague of 1656. In the background of the picture stands stricken Naples. In the foreground the common people of the city are pleading with the officials to intercede with God for them. The officials in turn are pleading with the Carthusian monks. The monks are praying to the three patron saints of the city, represented just above them in the sky. The saints are praying to the Virgin Mary. She is passing on their petitions to Christ, and He is offering them to God.

According to that picture, is it an easy matter to get God's help? Decidedly not. That

picture reveals the old and familiar notion that winning God's help is a long, difficult, and complicated affair. This theory permeated primitive religion. According to primitive thought, God had to be aroused, interested, cajoled, and even bribed before He would act on man's behalf. Hence sacrifices were offered to Him, elaborate rituals were performed in His honor, and prayers were repeated in His ear by specially influential personages. Perhaps in the end He might be roused from His apathy and persuaded to intervene! From primitive thought these ideas crept down into mediaeval thought, and then from mediaeval thought they came down into the religious practices of some of the people of our own day. Are these old ideas true? Some of us cannot believe they are. To us they seem a tragic perversion of the essential principles Jesus tried to teach.

What is our theory about getting God's help? Recall the argument we began to develop in the last chapter. As we look out on the vast process of evolution and the living

forms that have gradually crept into being, we are convinced there is a plan underlying life. Things do not merely "happen." They happen in definite sequences and in accordance with orderly procedures. Life moves steadily on, and (what is more significant) Life moves in particular and consistent directions. Such a cosmic plan, so it seems to us, necessitates a Mind that could conceive it and a Power that could put it into operation. We call this Mind and this Power behind the universe God. Where do we locate God, and how do we picture Him?

Men used to think that God could be found in some far-off corner of the universe, directing the course of events from those distant and inaccessible headquarters. That idea, accepted for centuries, has now been definitely abandoned by thinking people. We have come to the conclusion that God's relation to the familiar world of Space and Time and Matter must be something like the relation between a man's personality and his physical body. Of course

I cannot localize your personality in any particular part of your anatomy. How foolish it would be for me to tie a string around one of your fingers, or point to a particular fold in a diagram of your brain, and then say triumphantly, "See! Here is this man's personality. Bring a microscope, and perhaps we can find at last what a personality looks like." The nonsense of such a procedure would be evident to us all. We feel instinctively that a man's personality permeates his entire body, that it cannot possibly be localized in any part of his physical nature. In some such way God, we feel, permeates our vast universe of Space and Time and Matter. Long before the facts of modern evolutionary science were known, keen minds began to sense this truth. Centuries ago a Greek poet wrote, "In Him we live and move and have our being." Today, with the conclusions of modern science before us, that theory grows steadily more convincing. Evelyn Underhill has written some suggestive lines comparing human lives to tiny flowers that grow on a mountainside

and are nourished day by day by the streams that trickle down from the melting snow-cap far above. So, she says, our lives are rooted in God and draw their daily sustenance from Him.

> As the plant on the smooth of the hill
> That knows not the depth nor the height
> That knows not the might
> Of the whole,
> I am rooted and grounded in Him,
> The small leaves of my soul
> Thrust up from His will.
> I know not the terrible peak,
> The white and ineffable Thought
> Whence my hill-torrents flow
> And my nurture is brought:
> I am little and meek,
> I dare not to lift
> My look to His snow;
> But I drink drop by drop of its gift.[1]

That is the faith many of us have come to hold.

II

At this point many of the students of to-

[1] Evelyn Underhill, *"Theophanies."*

day raise an interesting question. They say to us, "We can readily conceive of God as a Power permeating the universe. Science seems to offer several obvious analogies. The force of gravitation, unseen but indubitably real, permeates the world of Matter. Magnetic currents and electrical energies move invisibly everywhere about us. God may be another Unseen Power in our universe. But what makes us think He cares about individual lives? Gravitation and electricity are obviously indifferent to our personal concerns. May not God be quite as aloof as they are? May His interest not be in some vast racial purpose, rather than in the relatively insignificant problems of individuals?" Here is a problem that is puzzling hundreds of thoughtful students to-day. Only recently a young woman, baffled by this particular difficulty, sent me this letter.

> I believe, of course, that there is Something or Someone at the heart of things. But I think of God (if I may give the Great Reality that name) as an imper-

sonal Power, a Fate or Destiny concerned with the total scheme-of-things rather than with individual human beings. Hence I might say that I believe in God, but I certainly do not believe in either prayer or immortality. My feeling is like that of Omar Khayyam:

'Tis all a checker-board of nights and days
Where Destiny with men for pieces plays,
Hither and thither moves and mates and slays,
And one by one back in the closet lays.

Can you tell me where the flaw in this reasoning is?

Perhaps we might answer these familiar questions by some such argument as this. For millions of years God had been at work through the evolutionary process developing and perfecting personalities. These personalities are, unless the implications of history prove wholly misleading, the supreme product of ages of effort. They are, it would seem, God's greatest object of interest. Furthermore these personalities seem to be highly essential to the development still going on and

destined to continue in the future. Whatever God's original method of working may have been, it seems now that He works chiefly in and through human beings. Through us the victory over ignorance and injustice and needless suffering is being gained. Through us other personalities, long deprived of the chance of self-development, are at last gaining their opportunities for growth. Through us the fairer and happier social order of the future is slowly taking shape. Personalities are, then, not only the fruit of God's long effort in the past; they also fill an essential place in His purposes for the future. Under such circumstances, is it not reasonable to assume that God cares about human beings and cares tremendously? Where else in the universe is there anything so worthy of His love and help as the sensitive and infinitely promising creatures He has called into existence and now makes His fellow-workers in the creation of a better world? If God is interested in anything, He must be interested in people. You say God might care about humanity as a

whole, but not about individual human beings in particular? But such generalized interest is logically impossible. Could a father care about "the family," and be indifferent to the individuals who make up that group? Could you care about your friends in general, and at the same time be uninterested in each friend in particular?

One who follows this argument will readily see the conclusion to which it has led many of us. We are convinced that human lives are literally surrounded by God's purpose, God's interest, God's love, God's eagerness to help. You and I are encompassed by these things just as a bird is surrounded by the clinging air, or as the myriad forms of marine life are surrounded by the all-embracing sea. Nothing we can do can take us out of God's interest, God's care, God's love. If this is true, we certainly do not have to make long, difficult, and complicated efforts to win His help. All we have to do is open our lives—in our own way—and let the divine assistance that is wait-

ing outside flow in. Suppose, for example, you owned a mountain cabin and wanted to make it fresh and habitable after the long winter was over. Would you have to induce the wind to enter the door? Would you have to plead with the sunshine to stream in the windows? Certainly not. The moment you opened the door and the windows, the wind and sunshine would surge in of their own accord. That is a picture of God's relation to human lives. We do not have to prevail upon Him to help us. He is always trying to do for us all that love can do. Our task is to make ourselves able to take what He is constantly seeking to give. Prayer? Prayer is certainly not a process by which we persuade a reluctant Deity to change His plans and give us benefits He had previously intended to withhold. Rather prayer is a process by which we open our lives and make ourselves able to receive what God has always been trying to bestow. Why do we need to pray at all? Because the doors and windows of the self tend

to close tight, barring out more and more completely the help and inspiration God is constantly seeking to impart. Through prayer, or through acts like prayer, the doors and windows are flung wide again. We might sum up our whole theory in a simple sentence. The chief effect of prayer is not a change wrought in God; it is a change wrought in us.

III

Suppose now that God is trying to give us His help. How does He do it? In what form and through what doorway does the help come?

According to much mediaeval thought, God entered human lives through abnormal psychological experiences and through peculiar faculties limited to a few favored individuals." The men and women who possessed these faculties or passed through these experiences were enabled to have startling experiences of direct communion with God. They claimed to hear His voice, see His face, feel

His immediate presence, receive direct and elaborate revelations of His will. What does modern psychology tell us about such individuals and such experiences? Modern psychology points out that these individuals were generally of a neurotic type, and that these experiences were—in many cases at least—unhappy symptoms of serious nervous or mental disorder. Professor Leuba quotes from a Catholic biography a strange account of one of the most extreme mystics of the seventeenth century.

> They tried her [Sister Marie] in the kitchen of the convent, but they were forced to give her up as hopeless. Everything dropped out of her hands. Then they tried her in the infirmary, but without much success. The admirable humility with which she made amends for her clumsiness could not prevent it from being prejudicial to order and regularity. Then they put her in the school, but the little girls cut pieces out of her dress for relics as if she were already a Saint. Poor,

> dear Sister Marie! She was living on earth in 1675 even less than she was in 1672, and finally they had to leave her in her heaven.[2]

If God's life really touches ours, it seems as if the contact must come through doorways more creditable than these. An unstable nervous system certainly cannot be an asset to the religious life.

How, then, do we picture God's activity in human lives? On the table before you is a radio-set, waiting to catch a message from a far-away human mind. That radio-set is an incredibly delicate mechanism that has been perfected after years of study and experiment. It will now catch, when conditions are right, messages sent out by a mind like yours hundreds of miles away. What if that radio-set is a symbol of your higher spiritual faculties —your conscience, your ideals, your impulse toward kindness—and God's contact with you? For millions of years God has been at work perfecting the delicate mental and spiritual

[2] James H. Leuba, *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism.*

mechanisms we find in every normal human personality to-day. The power to think, the power to feel pity, the power to distinguish (however faintly or intermittently) right from wrong, the power to respond to such unsubstantial things as beauty, high ideals, the unexpressed need of other people—all these capacities have been slowly built up within human nature. Through these mechanisms of the higher life God is now able, when conditions are right, to send ideas and impulses into a human mind. At the beginning of our racial life such an achievement was impossible. In the mind of primitive man these sensitive mechanisms had not developed, and God's revelations of Himself and His desires were therefore tragically restricted. As the centuries passed and these higher human faculties perfected themselves, men began to gain the power to "think God's thought after Him." To-day every normal person has hours of special receptivity, hours in which the ideas and impulses God is seeking to give finally filter through into consciousness.

Moments there are when heart and brain ring clear;
When the eyes see, and the apt ears hear
More in a second's tick than in a year. . . .

How true to the experience of us all!

Sometimes God's activity seems to be of an even simpler type. The idea or impulse He brings into the center of our consciousness does not come from an external source. Rather, it comes from the depths of our own mind, the fringes of our own memory. Perhaps an illustration will make this point clear. A student is sitting alone in his room in the evening, while ideas and impulses and memories stream through his mind, each one lingering for a moment in the bright focus of his attention. Presently he finds himself thinking of the letter he promised to write his brother who is trying desperately to earn his way through college. Where did that idea come from? It was, of course, in the depths of that boy's memory all the time. Now it has suddenly emerged into the center of his consciousness, the focal point of his thought. What brought that idea out of the recesses of memory? Several forces might

have done it. That boy had formed the habit of thinking of the different members of his family each night, and now this habitual action flashes before his mind the memory of his brother and of the letter he promised to write. Or that boy chanced to catch the fragrance of a lilac bush in the garden below, and gradually that perfume brought back the memory of the day when he and his brother played in a bower of lilacs, and that memory in turn recalled the thought of the promised letter. A deliberate effort of the will might bring back these ideas, summoning them one by one from the hinterland of consciousness. Here is one of the most familiar experiences in human life, the experience of finding a thought—long forgotten—suddenly standing again in the very center of attention. If habit and circumstance and an effort of the will can bring about this change, is it too much to suppose that God can do it, too? In most situations He does not need to bring into our minds any new ideas from outside. All He needs to do is utilize an old memory, a forgotten ideal, a stifled impulse

toward kindness. There is goodness enough hidden within us to transform our lives. There is wisdom enough latent in our minds to meet our needs. The problem is not to increase our spiritual resources; it is to utilize more fully the resources we already have.

Suppose God does have this power—the power to send a new idea into a human mind, or to bring an old idea into the center of attention. How much can God do for us through this power? He can certainly give us new hope and new courage. He can certainly rouse us to meet the needs of other people. He can even redirect the course of our career. Years ago Emerson wrote out of his own long experience, "The great crises in men's lives are not marriages, deaths, and great occasions. They are quiet afternoons at the turn of the road when new thoughts and impulses fill the heart." Suppose those new thoughts and impulses came from God, brought by Him out of the recesses of memory or deliberately sent by Him as fresh inspirations into the mind. Then God led men toward critical decisions, led

them safely through the crossroads, and brought them to the place of His purpose and desire. Grant that God has the same power that every one of us has—the power to put ideas into other minds—and you lay the foundation for a new and a firm faith in God's inspiration, God's guidance, God's constant help.

IV

Theories like these suggest a new technique of prayer. If God is always trying to help us, and if God's way of helping us is to put ideas into our minds whenever our finer powers are receptive and our spirit is quiet, then prayer is essentially the process of making our higher nature susceptible to God's influence in times of silence and inward peace. You say you have never gained help from conventional types of prayer, with their emphasis on ascriptions of praise and eager repetition? Suppose you stop trying to pray in a conventional and—for you—stilted way. Remind yourself that in prayer you are not trying to change

God, but to open your own life to His influence. Remember that you are trying to make yourself able to receive the ideas and impulses that He has always been trying to give, but which up to this time He has not been able to bring into the center of your thought. Then grow perfectly quiet, put out of your mind any bewildering or antagonizing recollections, and in your own way open your spirit to the ever-present and all-encompassing God. Prayer of this type may be strangely different from conventional types of petition, but its benefits for you—as for unnumbered thousands in the past—will be far greater and more immediate than you dream. Years ago one of Professor Royce's students made this impressive confession:

> Long ago I gave up all conventional ideas about prayer. When I pray now I no longer fancy that the course of Nature is going to be altered for my sake, or that my prayers will help me avoid the consequences of my own folly or misdeeds. That was and is my feeling about

prayer. But now when things are too much for me, when I am down on my luck and everything seems dark, I go alone by myself and bury my face in my hands and think hard that God must see how things really are. In that way alone, by just understanding me, He will help me. So I get myself together. That for me is prayer.

"Everyone that asketh receiveth, everyone that seeketh findeth, to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

What about the situations in which we need assistance of a more tangible type than new ideas? How does God help us then? God acts in those situations by working through other people for our benefit just as we often find Him working through us for their benefit. In such cases His help is conditioned of course by the fact that He must find a human mind into which He can put the helpful impulse. When such a mind is available, the help can be brought speedily. When such a mind is not

available, both God and men must wait and possibly suffer. One of the incidents in Dr. Grenfell's autobiography offers a striking illustration of these principles. Some years ago Dr. Grenfell was summoned to a settlement sixty miles distant to operate on a young fisherman who was in danger of death from blood-poisoning. In the effort to cover the distance as rapidly as possible, Dr. Grenfell drove his dog-team across a wide inlet from the Atlantic, thinking that the ice was solid. Half way across, however, the ice suddenly gave way, and Dr. Grenfell and the dogs plunged into the half-frozen stream. After a hard struggle Dr. Grenfell climbed out on to a huge cake of floating ice and pulled the dogs after him. Then he and the dogs began drifting helplessly toward the sea. Here is his own account of the hours that followed:

> Night found me ten miles on my seaward voyage. I had skinned three of my dogs and wrapped their fur about me as a coat. Their bodies I piled up to make a windbreak on the ice. At intervals I

took off my clothes, wrung them out, swung them in the wind, and then put on first one garment and then the next, hoping that the heat of my body would dry them. Forcing my biggest dog to lie down, I cuddled up close to him, drew the improvised dog-skin rug over me and went to sleep. The hand that was against the dog stayed warm, but the other was soon frozen. About midnight I awoke, shivering. The moon was just rising, and the wind was driving me steadily toward the open sea. But somehow my faith was untroubled. After all, it was quite natural for me to be passing to the portal of death from that frozen stream. And quite unbidden the words of an old hymn began running through my mind:

> My God and Father, while I stray
> Far from my home on life's rough way,
> O teach me from my heart to say
> Thy will be done!

Could God do anything in a situation like that? Ideas and impulses certainly would not

save Dr. Grenfell, unless they were ideas and impulses put into the mind of some one in a position to help him. Here is the conclusion of the story:

> The afternoon I broke through the ice and began drifting out to sea, four men were out on the headland at the river's mouth cutting up some seals they had killed in the fall. Just as they were leaving for home, my ice-cake drifted into the open and one of the men noticed it. On returning to the village they reported that something alive was adrift on the floe. The one man in that section who owned a good spy-glass jumped up from his supper and hurried over to the lookout on the Atlantic cliffs. Dusk though it was, he saw me out on the ice and noticed my weak efforts to wave signals to the shore. He surmised who it must be, and as night was closing the men from that village made their first heroic effort to launch a boat and save me. Little though I realized it, many eyes were watching me from

those cliffs, and through the long darkness men who knew me were making plans to rescue me at dawn.[3]

You need help and need it bitterly? God is doing all that love can do to bring that help. He will bring it, just as soon as He finds a human being through whom to work.

[3] Wilfred T. Grenfell, *A Labrador Doctor.*

Chapter IV

CAN WE STILL BELIEVE IN IMMORTALITY?

I

Harry Kemp has recently published this unusual verse about a soldier who was killed by a high-explosive shell.

He did not know that he was dead:
He walked along the crowded street,
Smiled, tipped his hat, nodded his head
To friends he chanced to meet.

And yet they passed him quietly by
With an unknowing, level stare;
They met him with an abstract eye
As though he were the air.

He found his wife all dressed in black,
He kissed her mouth, he stroked her head;
"Folks act so strange since I came back
From over there," he said.

She spoke no word, she only smiled,
And then he heard her say his name

And saw her study, grief-beguiled,
His picture in a frame.

Then he remembered . . . that black night,
And the great shell-burst white and red,
The sudden plunging into light . . .
And knew that he was dead.

Of course that is an unconventional conception of immortality. You find there no suggestion of a distant heaven with its gorgeous company of angels. Neither do you find any implication of a depersonalized existence in which the individual soul is reabsorbed into the Infinite and loses all marks of individuality. Rather, you find there the conviction that, when the experience of death is past, the individual personality stays here and keeps on living, loving, working, and growing as in the past. This is the conception of immortality which many of us have come to hold. Can we defend it, as we have tried to defend our other religious beliefs, on the ground of reasonableness? Or must we base this hope and this faith solely on our own subjective desire?

II

One of our magazines recently published this quaint account of the average human being:

> The average man, weighing 150 pounds, contains enough iron to make 4 tenpenny nails, enough fat to make 75 candles and a good-sized piece of soap, enough phosphate to make some 8,000 boxes of matches, and enough hydrogen (in combination) to fill a balloon and float him off among the clouds. In addition he contains 10 gallons of water, 6 teaspoonsful of salt, a bowl of sugar, and other chemical elements equivalent to those found in 100 dozen eggs.

Some such analysis is undoubtedly correct. All these chemical elements, in these quantities, are found in us all. But is there anything else in a living person? Apparently there is. It is that strange "other thing" that makes the difference between a man alive and the same man dead. The moment after death all the chemical elements are there, but this other thing has vanished. What is it? We give it

strange and impressive names such as life, soul, personality, consciousness; but in reality these names merely veil our ignorance. No one knows what this second part of our nature is. We make guesses about it, as men have done since the dawn of history.

Just now a great many people, and among them many college students, are advancing a simple and apparently convincing theory about the personality. They say to us, "A man's personality is only a strange spark produced by that curious physical mechanism we call his body and his brain. Human beings are nothing but highly complex machines—self-developing, self-adjusting, self-repairing, and self-reproducing. These machines build themselves up in accordance with well-defined laws of growth, and when they are in perfect working-order they produce those strange products so familiar to physicians and psychologists. The cells of the stomach, for instance, secrete a particular juice which makes the process of digestion possible. Similarly, the brain gen-

erates consciousness, and with it ideas, purposes, moral ideals. In the end, body and brain wear out and fall to pieces. What happens then to the personality? The same thing that happens to an electric current when the dynamo that produced it is taken apart. The current, and the personality, vanish forever." There is the mechanistic theory of human life —neat, clever, and apparently convincing.

But before accepting this theory and trying to live upon it, let us study its implications. We could well believe that a man might make a violin, learn to play upon it, and finally master some difficult concerto. But could we possibly believe that a violin could make itself, organize its constituent parts, find and adjust and tune its four strings, and then triumphantly perform upon itself a great sonata? Here we pass the boundaries of common sense, and everyone smiles at the notion of the self-originating, self-adjusting, and self-performing violin. But this is the very theory the mechanists are asking us to believe about ourselves.

No wonder that more and more scientists find themselves unable to accept it! Listen to the keen sentences in which Dr. Haldane, one of the most eminent physiologists of England, rejects the mechanistic philosophy:

> In the case of the human organism, the mechanistic theory assumes the vast assemblage of the most intricate and delicately adjusted cell-mechanisms, each one so constituted as to keep itself in working order year after year, and in exact coordination with millions of others. Such an assumption taxes scientific imagination to the utmost, but let us make it and then carry the mechanistic theory one step further. We must now explain the process of reproduction and heredity. According to the mechanistic theory, the microscopic nucleus of the new germ-cell must carry within its substance a mechanism which will not only produce the millions of complex and delicately balanced mechanisms which constitute the adult organism, but will also provide for their arrangement in

> certain specified forms and their orderly development into tissues and organs. The mind recoils from such a stupendous assumption as this. As a physiologist, I can see no use for the theory that life is a mechanical process. This theory does not help me in my work, and indeed I think that it now hinders very seriously the progress of modern physiology. Sooner or later men will realize that the materialism and mechanism of the nineteenth century were only insignificant eddies in the stream of human thought.[1]

If body and brain do not generate personality, where does personality come from? Here we face the riddle again and each man must give his own answer to it. The answer some of us give is this. Personalities are created by God, sent out from Him new and fresh at every instant of Time, just as new and fresh light-rays are constantly emanating from the sun. These eternal and divinely created personalities operate through the familiar body-

[1] J. S. Haldane, *Mechanism, Life, and Personality.*

brain mechanism, but are not wholly dependent upon it. When the body-brain mechanism breaks down in death, these personalities find other mechanisms through which to function and in which to continue their existence.

Perhaps an analogy drawn from the radio will make this point clearer. I am standing before a microphone, creating moment by moment varying sounds we call words as expressions of the ideas and purposes within my mind. Those words, newly created, are caught by the microphone, transferred to a broadcasting station, and there sent forth into space as vibrations in the invisible ether. Radio engineers tell us that they move in every direction, darting at inconceivable speed to the very boundaries of the universe. Here and there in that vast sphere the vibrations come upon little devices called receiving-sets. These instruments have the power of absorbing the ether-vibrations and translating them back into audibility. Of course the accuracy and fullness of that reproduction varies with different receiving-sets. Sometimes the ether-vibrations

are picked up by a set that is poorly adjusted or inadequately energized. Then the words that were originally broadcast in perfect clearness "come through" in broken and uncertain form. At other times and in other sets, the vibrations find a perfect reproducing mechanism. Then the very quality of my voice, the very individuality of my utterance, emerge with startling clearness in that far-off locality. These facts would have seemed the merest nonsense a decade ago. To-day they are recognized as sober and demonstrable truth by thousands of radio listeners all over the world.

Suppose, now, that this is a picture of God's relation to our world. At the heart of things is the Eternal God, a source of exhaustless life. Moment by moment He creates new personalities and sends them out from Himself into our world. Each one, perfect as it comes from Him, throbs with a spark of His wisdom, His power, His life. Here in our world there are curious mechanisms which we call bodies and brains that have the power of taking up these unseen personalities and giving them a me-

dium of expression. Sometimes the body and the brain are so perfectly adjusted and energized that the eternal self within can find clear expression. At other times there are, within the reproducing-mechanism, false tunings and defective energies. Then that inadequate physical and mental apparatus almost stifles the divine personality as it struggles for expression. You say your body and your brain created your personality? Look at the next radio-set you see. That mechanism does not create the messages that echo from it. It is merely a device through which a message, sent out by a distant and unseen mind, gains expression.

On such a theory the so-called problem of immortality solves itself. Death is only a minor physical incident, marking the transition of the eternal personality from the first to the second phase of its timeless existence. It is comparable to the change we might witness if, while listening to an address over the radio, our first receiving-set broke down and we hurriedly tuned in with another instrument

on the same message. Death merely takes from us the last in a series of physical mechanisms through which our personality has, up to that moment, been operating. Look back over your own experience and you will see what some of these previous mechanisms have been, and how constantly this process of substitution has been going on. At the beginning of your career your personality had, as its medium of expression, the body and brain of a little child. Naturally your power to work and think was limited. Eventually your personality acquired the body and brain of an adult, and your capacity for achievement increased proportionately. Some day your personality will function through the body and brain of old age. When that happens, some of your powers will be limited again and others will apparently expand to even greater fullness. It is as though a violinist practiced year after year on successive instruments, finding that his technique steadily improved and that his tone varied slightly with the different violins from which it was drawn. Has that musi-

cian anything to fear when he finds that one of his boyhood instruments is falling to pieces? Certainly not. The break-up of a fragile device of ebony and pine and glue cannot affect his power to create melody. He will take another violin and play as in the past. You are afraid of death? You think it may put an end to your existence? Nothing can do that. God put you into this world. Nothing can ever take you out.

This starry world and I in it:
How can I get out?
I go to sleep, but when I wake I am still here,
All night the flame of life burned in my breast and
my brain.
Death?
Death is a swing-door,
I push through and come out on the other side,
But the other side is this world, just as this side is.
There is no escape.
That was true a hundred million years ago,
It will be true a hundred million years hence,
It is true now, at this very moment.[2]

[2] James Oppenheim, "Death."

III

Suppose we try to carry our thought a step further. All of us would like to feel that the second phase of our existence will retain some of the happy characteristics of the first. We would like to feel, for example, that there will still be work to do, and that there will still be friendship and love to transfigure that new world as they certainly have transfigured this. Are there convincing arguments for supporting such a belief? Can we base this faith on reason and common sense, or must we build it solely on our own intense desire?

At the outset of any such discussion we must admit frankly there are many questions about the second stage of our development which we cannot answer. Where will it be? Through what kind of a mechanism will our personalities operate? Will we be able to maintain some contact, however slight, with personalities in the first phase of existence? Here are questions that have never been answered with any degree of conclusiveness. A correspondent writes that she can believe there

is another stage of development beyond this one, but that when she reaches this point in her thought "everything grows hazy." That is a universal experience. There are problems involved in the survival of individual personality which no one of us can solve.

But though we cannot learn in advance the details of the next life, there are certain major probabilities about the future which we may well consider. Recently the City Planning Board of Springfield, Massachusetts, published a highly interesting and curiously detailed description of the city as it will be in 1950. Of course 1950 is an appreciable distance in the future, and in a certain exact sense of the word no one can "know" anything about the community of that day. At the same time there are certain probabilities of future development which are so reasonable that the city authorities are directing present developments with reference to them.

In 1950 Springfield will be twice as large as it is to-day. It will have a popu-

lation of about 275,000. The new growth of the city will be chiefly toward the southeast, and a generation hence the center of population will be much further in that direction than it is to-day. At that time there will be some 27,500 wage-earners in the city, and at least 30,000 foreigners who are not here at present. The vacant lots to the east of the present city will be covered with industrial plants, and the business section of the new city will extend in an unbroken line some two miles east of the old business center. The different City Departments will of course have far more to do in 1950 than they have to-day. The Park Department will have 1500 acres of park land to care for instead of 1267 as it has to-day. The Street Department will superintend 55 miles of paved streets rather than 27 as at present. The School Department will provide educational facilities for 30,000 children instead of 22,000.

Notice that these are definite statements

rather than generalized prophecies. How do engineers figure out such detailed facts a quarter century in advance? There is nothing secret about the process. On the assumption that our world is an orderly place, they project the curve of any present development twenty-five years on their charts. There the city of the future stands revealed.

Suppose we follow a similar procedure with reference to our own future. We assume, just as the city's engineers assume, that our world is an essentially orderly place. That means that the same general tendencies will continue, that the same causes will produce the same effects, and that in the production of the same effects the same causes must (presumably) be employed. Making this reasonable assumption and following this familiar procedure, where will our argument carry us? Here are three conclusions.

First: The present development of personality is conditioned upon real struggle and real effort. How, for example, do we gain the power to think? By applying our mind to one

hard problem after another, grappling with innumerable intellectual difficulties as they emerge in sequence. In that way the power to think—think clearly and coherently and undisturbed by prejudice—is slowly developed within us. The power to achieve is built up in the same way. One task after another, one responsibility after another, one emergency after another—and gradually we gain the capacity for sustained and resourceful accomplishment. Here is one of the basic principles of the development of personality. Our spiritual growth is conditioned upon real problems and real difficulties. Suppose, now, that the universe is an orderly and a coherent place, that the same fundamental processes which we see operating to-day will continue to operate in the future, and that the same results will there be attained by the same procedures. Project the clearly defined curve of growth through effort beyond the vertical intersection of Death so sharply marked on your chart of personal existence. What do you see? You see an eternal life with real problems, real

tasks, real responsibilities; and out of your struggle with them emerges the further development of your personality. That is the kind of immortality most of us want, an immortality of activity and achievement rather than interminable rest. There is good reason to believe it is the very immortality that lies ahead.

Second: The developing personalities we see about us in this first phase of existence are inextricably intertwined with each other. There is no such thing as a solitary human life. Even those individuals who seem most isolated have, somewhere in the world, former comrades whose life-experience was and is curiously interwoven with their own. Out of relationships like these come the major possibilities of spiritual growth. Here, for example, are two young people whose lives have been transformed by love for each other. Out of that experience and out of the deepening relationships that flow from it come the strongest incentives and the highest developments those two lives will know. Year by year love and comradeship and common responsi-

bilities work their perennial miracle, and eventually these two personalities—once counted ordinary and unpromising—begin to be radiant with the splendor of idealism and loyalty and sacrificial love. Here is a second fundamental principle of the development of personality. Growth comes not only through struggle and effort, but also through contacts, friendships, love. Suppose, now, our world is as orderly a place as it seems to be. Suppose this principle will operate in the future as it has obviously operated in the past, and that the future growth of personality will be again conditioned upon rich and varied human relationships. What does that mean for our own future? It means an eternal life transfigured by friendship and love, an immortality in which we shall rediscover old comrades and find new ones. This is the future all of us want. Surely we have reason to suppose that it is the very future which lies ahead.

Third: In the process of personal development going on all about us, human lives are literally surrounded by the unfailing love and

care of God. Of course there are thwartings and tragedies. Of course there are hours of darkness and anguish and pain. But look at human experience as a whole. Study the long ascent of mankind from that first spark of organic life in the primeval sea. How the love and care of God surround our race! Our fragile physical organisms needed a particular Earth on which to live and grow. The environment we had to have was prepared long in advance for us. Our personalities to-day reach out insistently for work, for love, for faith—the things by which men live. The satisfactions and incentives we crave are provided for us. Hour by hour all of us, caught in sudden emergencies, call on ourselves and on the universe for wisdom, strength, endurance, poise. What happens? Jesus speaks for the generations. "Everyone that asketh receiveth. Everyone that seeketh findeth. To him that knocketh it shall be opened." Here is a fundamental principle underlying the development of personality. Human lives are surrounded by the unfailing love and care of God.

Carry that curve beyond the black intersection of Death. Project it, on your chart of existence, into the eternity ahead. What do you see? Personalities still safe in the Everlasting Arms.

When the anxious hearts say: Where?
God doth answer: In My care.

Were they frightened at the last?
No, the dread of Death was past.

Do they need our tenderness?
Where is love like Mine to bless?

Father, tell us where are they?
In My keeping, night and day.

Chapter V

THE WORLD'S DEBT TO JESUS

I

Last November one of the Springfield papers received this letter from a resident of the city:

> I have been told that a motorist from Ware who was driving over the Mohawk Trail skidded off the road, slid down a steep bank, and finally brought up in a ditch. There, according to the story, he found in the underbrush a wrecked Indiana car with the remains of four people inside. The bodies, it was said, had been there over a year. Can you give me any light as to the truth of this disturbing rumor?

The editor of the paper promptly published the letter with these interesting sentences of comment:

This particular story seems to have started in the spring of 1925, though no one can now learn when or where or how it originated. The only unusual thing about this legend is that it has persisted in so many forms and for such a long time. The main outline of the story is always the same. A car from the West with the bodies of several people inside has been found at the bottom of an embankment on the Mohawk Trail. The latest version of the story which has reached us gives a variant account of the way in which the gruesome discovery was made. According to this version, a motorist was changing a tire and laid his spare against a near-by tree. Somehow or other it became dislodged and rolled down hill into a gully. The motorist ran after it, and in the gully found a Kansas car with four bodies inside. When this strange legend first started the State Police made a thorough investigation. There is not a particle of truth anywhere in the story.

Apparently the development and elaboration of legends is not limited to the world of antiquity. Here is a curious and ever-expanding legend which sprang up in our own time and in our own part of the world. Do we need to assume that some one who lived near the Mohawk Trail deliberately concocted that story in order to make an impression? Do we need to conclude that other people, knowing that the story was false, deliberately circulated it among their friends in order to make an impression? Certainly not. Most of us have learned from sad experience that the average human being listens inattentively, hears inaccurately, and then exaggerates incredibly. Given these familiar human traits and a short period of time, and a legend-cycle will spring up—mushroom-like—in any locality or any period of history.

In the case of influential personalities, the development of legends proceeds with peculiar vigor. Around the life and teaching of any great man, a dozen strange stories will speedily spring up and eventually gain credence as

sober and undiluted truth. One of the clearest illustrations of this principle is offered by the successive biographies of Francis Xavier, the heroic Catholic missionary of the Reformation era. Xavier started for the East in 1541, and for eleven years toiled to bring his faith to the degraded tribes of India and Japan. He traveled from village to village, gathering his audiences by ringing a bell, and then teaching them as best he could with a few broken phrases and a clumsy sign-language. After terrific hardship, he died on the desert island of San Chan in 1552. Fortunately for us, Xavier left behind a great many letters which, together with other letters written by his comrades and friends, were published shortly after his death. It is a striking fact that not one of these contemporary documents contains a real miracle-story. Rather they tell of incessant hardship, of the difficulties Xavier encountered as a result of his ignorance of the native languages, and in particular of his struggle in learning the rudiments of Japanese. Here are the actual facts, if Xavier and

his comrades knew what happened. But within three years after Xavier's death, the inevitable legend-building process had begun. Year by year new marvels were attributed to him, and when he was finally canonized, in 1622, ten astounding miracles were solemnly accepted as facts of his career. He had made sea-water fresh, he had levitated himself in mid-air, he had caused an earthquake, and he had buried a village under hot ashes. On reaching India he had been met by a crab walking up out of the water, holding in its outstretched claw a precious crucifix which had fallen overboard during the voyage. Most curious of all, these later legends insist that Xavier was given by a special miracle complete mastery of the Japanese language. Though he had never studied it, he found himself speaking it with such fluency and perfection of accent that Japanese auditors insisted that he must be a native of their country.[1] Here are the eager tributes of a later century,

[1] Andrew D. White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (Vol. II).

while all the time Xavier's own letters are telling their pitiful tale of hardship, discouragement, and defeat. How dearly human beings love the miraculous!

II

What has all this to do with Jesus? Some of us feel that it has a great deal. We have come to the conclusion that legends undoubtedly sprang up around the figure of Jesus, just as they did around the figure of Francis Xavier. Even during Jesus' lifetime there were undoubtedly misunderstandings of simple events in His career, and misinterpretations of simple statements which He made. We see similar developments in our own time, and there is every reason to believe that Jesus' world was far more credulous and far less well informed than ours. There is nothing discreditable about the fact that such processes went on in Jesus' case. There is certainly nothing irreverent in admitting that what happened did happen.

As a matter of fact we can trace clearly the

emergence and the development of some of the legends about Jesus. In Luke xiii we find a short but highly suggestive parable based on the story of a barren fig-tree. In Mark xi we find a miracle-story in which Jesus is represented as cursing a fig-tree because it bore no fruit. The story further states that Jesus did this even though that was not the season for figs. Even the most conservative readers of the Gospels find it hard to understand and accept that incident. Why would Jesus, a young man who had grown up in the country, expect to find figs on a tree at the wrong time of year? How could He, of all men, curse a tree for failing to bear fruit out of season? The only convincing explanation of the incident is that a legend had here crept into existence. Some one who heard the parable of the barren fig-tree misunderstood the story and repeated it as an actual incident of Jesus' life, adding the imaginary detail of the curse and suggesting a reason why a curse might have been uttered. The fact that this miraculous incident is reported in Mark's Gospel, the

earliest of the four in our New Testament, shows at what an early period the legend-building process began.

When we turn to a later era we find that the legend-building process speedily created around the figure of Jesus a cycle of miracle stories quite as startling as those attributed to Francis Xavier by his later biographers. Listen, for example, to a story of Jesus' childhood found in the so-called "Gospel of Thomas," dated long after the last of the New Testament writings.

> When the child Jesus was five years of age, He was playing with other Hebrew boys by a running stream. He took from the bank some soft clay and formed out of it twelve sparrows. But a certain Jew went away and told His father Joseph: Behold, thy boy is playing by the river and hath taken clay and formed it into twelve sparrows, and profaneth the Sabbath. Then Joseph came to the place where Jesus was, and called Him and said: Why doest Thou that which it is

not lawful to do on the Sabbath? Then Jesus, clapping together the palms of His hands, called to the sparrows: Fly away! So the sparrows fled away, making a noise.[2]

Here, obviously, as in the case of the later stories about Francis Xavier, we pass from the realm of truth to the world of fancy.

III

Facts like these, widely recognized by scholars and secretly suspected by innumerable young people, suggest the first task confronting those who would make the figure of Jesus convincing and appealing to the new generation. We must make our way behind the Jesus of legend and expanding tradition to the Jesus of actual fact. We must rediscover, as far as we can at this late date, the Jesus of history. When we know the real events of His life and the original meaning of His teaching, we shall be in a position to interpret Him wisely and effectively to the young people of our day.

[2] Hone, *The Apocryphal New Testament.*

For many years scholars who recognize the importance of this undertaking have been at work, slowly disentangling the facts of Jesus' life from the mass of legend and tradition which so speedily grew up about it. The conclusions these scholars have reached about the course of Jesus' life can be stated simply. Jesus was born about the year 4 B.C. Our earliest account of His life (the Gospel of Mark, written shortly before 70 A.D.) contains no suggestion of a miraculous birth. The obvious implication of the narrative is that Jesus was the child of Joseph and Mary, the eldest in a large family of at least five boys and two girls. For some thirty years Jesus lived in complete obscurity in the little village of Nazareth. We say "complete obscurity." It is significant that even the generation which followed Jesus was unable to gather more than one incident from that long period of silence. Jesus' public career seems to have begun about the year 29 A.D., and (contrary to a popular notion) seems to have lasted not more than eighteen months. Jesus' initial incentive toward this career apparently came from His

contact with John the Baptist. Thereafter we find Jesus living the life of a self-appointed and itinerant rabbi, teaching and preaching in the villages near Nazareth and Capernaum. For a time He enjoyed a certain popularity and success, then the more conservative teachers of His time raised the familiar cry of heresy, and He was obliged to flee for His life and hide in the regions to the north. There, with almost incredible heroism, He resolved to hurry to Jerusalem and make an appeal to the nation at the time of the Passover Feast. What convictions and purposes were in His mind during those last few days of His life, and what beliefs He had come to hold about Himself and His work and His relation to God, our meager records do not reveal. It may be that Jesus deliberately courted death in the faith that His vicarious sacrifice of Himself would rouse the nation to repentance and hasten the advent of God's promised Kingdom. At any rate, Jesus appeared suddenly in Jerusalem, made His brave appeal, and perished within a week. Here are the

simple and tragic facts, dissociated from the gorgeous trappings of later tradition.

Will this Jesus of history be an appealing figure to the men and women of our time and the future, or must the golden haze of legend be preserved at any cost? Speaking for myself, I must say that the Francis Xavier of history, wandering from village to village and heroically carrying out his purpose, is a far more appealing figure than the Francis Xavier of later legend with all his accoutrements of miracle. And the Jesus of history, setting His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, seems to me a far more inspiring comrade and example than the essentially miraculous Jesus pictured in the expanding traditions of later centuries.

IV

What were the ideas which Jesus gave the world? Here again we must distinguish between Jesus' own convictions and those that have been attributed to Him by later followers and interpreters. As any intelligent student

of history realizes, Jesus' words have been twisted into a defense of many theories unknown to Him and the world of His day. During the Middle Ages, for example, Christians were forbidden to loan money on interest, and Dante pictured money-lenders in one of the worst regions of his hell. Why was it counted a sin to charge interest? Religious leaders pointed to Jesus' words recorded in the Gospel of Luke, "Lend, hoping for nothing again." That sentence was interpreted as a prohibition of the taking of interest, and this misinterpretation of one of Jesus' simple appeals for friendliness became one of the influences leading to the development of money-lending as a characteristically Jewish (as contrasted with Christian) occupation. In our own time a similarly fantastic mistreatment of Jesus' words goes on in certain circles. Recently a well-intentioned teacher published a pamphlet containing the statement that Jesus believed in the verbal infallibility of the present English Bible. Still more, Jesus believed (according to this interpreter) in the infallibility of

the punctuation of the present English Bible. The evidence? "Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the Law till all be fulfilled." "What," asks this teacher, "can a jot or a title mean but a period, a quotation mark, or even a comma?"

When we try to discover Jesus' own ideas, as contrasted with those of His interpreters, we follow three simple procedures which will approve themselves to the good judgment of anyone who approaches this problem without bias or presupposition. We recognize, first of all, that Jesus constantly used vivid and hyperbolic language, as Oriental teachers have always done. To interpret His picturesque Eastern phrases literally is to abuse cruelly their true meaning. Recently a student asked me how he was to understand the strange saying, "If any man come after me, and hate not his father and mother, he cannot be my disciple." What was the only sensible answer to make? It was the answer we must make when questions are asked about many other

passages of similarly vivid and picturesque phraseology. Jesus was deliberately using hyperbolic language to catch the attention of His hearers and force an idea sharply on their attention. He trusted those hearers to use their own common sense in figuring out the true meaning of His words. You say we have no warrant for interpreting the Bible in a figurative way? Turn to the Song of Solomon and read this description of a beautiful woman:

> Thy hair is as a flock of goats,
> Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep newly-shorn,
> Thy neck is like the Tower of David,
> And thy nose like the Tower of Lebanon.

Why not remember that Jesus was a member of this same Oriental race? Why not let Him use the vivid imagery that came so naturally to Him?

We also realize that Jesus' ideas were somewhat influenced by the beliefs and situations of His own day. Just as He adopted the language and the literary technique of His time, so He also adopted the dominant ideas and

convictions of His generation and His locality. It is perfectly clear that He shared the contemporary belief that disease was often (perhaps always) caused by demons. He also seems to have believed, in company with many men of His day, that wealth was—in and of itself—an evil, and that indiscriminate and widespread charity would solve the problem of poverty. It is obvious that He felt the present world-order would come to an end within the lifetime of His own generation (Mark ix:1). Here were ideas widely current in Jesus' day and, as we should expect, shared by Jesus Himself. When we meet these ideas in His teaching we must admit their presence there, make allowance for the influence they exerted on Jesus' ideas, and then turn quietly to the fuller knowledge on these points which God has revealed to a later and a more experienced age.

A third fact we are beginning to realize as we study Jesus' teaching is this. There were scores of problems, and many of them prob-

lems on which we deeply crave counsel, which Jesus never faced and on which His teachings give us not a syllable of advice. For example, Jesus never faced the problem involved in loaning money for interest. The mediaeval Church was mistaken when it thought He did. Jesus never discussed the verbal infallibility of the present English Bible or the divine inspiration of its punctuation marks. How could He have discussed those points more than thirteen centuries before the first English Bible was written? Similarly, Jesus never faced the problems involved in the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquor by governmental decree, or the problems of war and peace as they have emerged in a modern civilization like ours. He never faced the detailed difficulties that perplex us in connection with the relations between capital and labor, the establishment of a living wage, and the determining of the proper length of the working-day in modern industry. All these problems, bewildering our generation, lay outside the little, first-century Palestine which Jesus

knew. To try to derive solutions of these typically modern difficulties from stray phrases of the Sermon on the Mount is as foolish as to hunt through the Epistles in the hope of finding Paul's opinion of the League of Nations. The plain fact is that Jesus' recorded teachings will not give us detailed answers to all the questions—intellectual and social—that are emerging in modern life. In our efforts to solve these new problems we have two and only two guides to follow—our own intelligence, and the experience of the race.

When we have studied the records of Jesus' teaching in this light, what do we find? What were the dominant ideas in Jesus' mind, the major principles He tried to teach the world? As one of the most stimulating writers of our day has pointed out,[2] they can be summed up quite simply. Three great convictions underlay Jesus' teaching and Jesus' life:

God, omnipotent and eternal, is still our Father.
Men and women, God's children, are of infinite value.
God and men find happiness only in unfailing love.

[2] William G. Ballantine, *The Young Man from Jerusalem.*

Those basic convictions gave Jesus that unfaltering trust in God which characterized everything He said and did. In His everyday dealings with people, Jesus seems to have followed four major principles:

Inclusive love
Humble service
Freedom
Common sense

In putting these principles into practice, and in following His convictions about God and men and the attainment of happiness, Jesus showed seven habitual attitudes. They were characteristic of the new type of life He began to live, and they have been characteristic of true Christians—that is, sincere followers of Jesus' way of life—ever since. The seven habitual attitudes were:

Unwavering trust in God's love and care
The recognition of a new standard of values
Loyalty to new and higher standards of duty
Reverence for every human personality
Willing self-sacrifice for others
Charitable judgment of others
Unfailing readiness to forgive others

Here you find Jesus' interpretation of life and Jesus' way to live. They were the hope of humanity in the first century. They are the hope of humanity to-day.

V

With this story of Jesus' life and this summary of His teaching before us, what can we say about His meaning for the world? What did He do for the human race? There are three obvious answers in which almost everyone will concur.

First: Jesus gave the world the record of a singularly triumphant life, a record which has been a unique source of inspiration ever since. Jesus faced one by one the hardest situations known to human experience. Poverty? "Foxes have holes, the birds of the air nests; the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Malicious slander? "By Beelzebub, prince of the demons, this man casteth out demons." Hatred? "They were all filled with wrath, and cast Him forth out of their city." Loneliness? "They all forsook Him

and fled." Failure and utter despair? "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" One by one Jesus met these harrowing experiences, and one by one Jesus mastered them. How His triumphant words ring across the centuries! "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." Jesus' influence as an example of triumphant living, the inspiration He still exerts as the supreme victor in the struggle of life, are literally beyond computation. Here is the conclusion one of the greatest historians of the last century reached:

> It was reserved for Christianity to present the world an ideal Character which through all the changes of nineteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love; has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, temperaments, and conditions; has been not only the highest pattern of virtue but also the strongest incentive toward its practice; and thus has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the sim-

ple record of those short years has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of the philosophers and all the exhortations of the moralists.'

Second: Jesus gave the world a new way to live. Granted that many of his teachings were phrased in picturesque language which cannot be interpreted literally. Granted that some of His ideas, held in common with all the men of the first century, are now quietly laid aside by a generation that has been given fuller scientific knowledge. Within that perishable framework Jesus sketched with perfect clearness his new "way of life." Its three essential convictions, its four practical principles, its seven habitual attitudes inaugurated a new era in human relationships. Whenever men have followed that way of life, they have found it leading them to happiness and courage and power, and promising to guide humanity away from sin and suffering and hatred toward virtue and joy and peace. You say that profes-

'William E. H. Lecky, *A History of European Morals.*

sional Christians are the only ones who share this enthusiasm for Jesus' way of life? Listen to George Bernard Shaw: "I am no more a Christian than Pilate was or than you are, gentle reader. Yet I am ready to admit that after studying the world of human misery for sixty years, I see no way out of the world's trouble but the way Jesus would have found, had He undertaken the work of a modern, practical statesman." Or listen to Bertrand Russell, who openly announces his skepticism about both God and immortality: "If all men would summon the courage and the vision to live in Jesus' way, there would be no need for the regeneration of the world by economic or political reform. All the reform that is needed would come automatically through the regeneration of individuals." Wherever we turn we find men admitting that Jesus' way of life is the hope of the world, the noblest vision human eyes have ever seen.

Third: Jesus strengthened, as no one has done before or since, humanity's faith in the reality and the love of God. Of course people

had believed in God before Jesus' time. Of course men of other races and other faiths had reached the conviction that there is a Great Reality in whom "we live and move and have our being." Of course the world's thought of God has grown and developed since Jesus' day. But, when all these admissions are made, the fact still remains that Jesus did more than any other person in history to strengthen men's faith in a living, loving God. Here we are, fragile human creatures who are surrounded by a vast mystery no one has ever fully explained. Where did we come from? Where do we go to? What is the meaning of existence anyway? Is there any Power beyond us from which we can draw help in times of need? Here are the questions which men of all the centuries have tried to answer, just as we are trying to answer them to-day. But across the puzzled years ring Jesus' brave words of faith. "Fear not! The very hairs of your head are numbered. Ask, and ye shall receive. Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." No wonder men have lav-

ished on Jesus their utmost devotion and their most extravagant praise. It was Jesus who, more than any other figure in history, led them out of the darkness of fear and despair, and into the sunshine of courage and hope. Through Him they gained new faith—first faith in God, and then faith in life, faith in themselves, and faith in a possible victory over circumstance and death.

VI

But there are two other points about Jesus and His work which are of even greater significance. Some people may not agree with them, and others may put upon them an interpretation quite different from the one Jesus' followers make. But the two points stand as facts of history, however we regard them.

First: For unnumbered people, Jesus has been and is to-day a convincing revelation of God. Some of these people have felt that through Jesus God revealed to mankind, in final and supreme form, the divine truth and the divine will for human lives. "God, having

of old time spoken unto the fathers by the prophets, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us by His Son." This is the interpretation great numbers of individuals, in the past and in our own day, have made of Jesus' message. Other Christians have gone further and declared that Jesus was a revelation not only of God's truth, but also of God's character and God's very nature. "We have seen the glory of God revealed in the face of Jesus Christ." This is the interpretation innumerable individuals through all the centuries have placed on Jesus' personality. In it they felt they saw an image, small but perfect, of the Divine Personality. Jesus was for them a human miniature of God: God was for them an infinitely extended Jesus. Listen, for example, to one of the ablest Methodist leaders of our time:

> I think of God as Christlike. If God could live a human life, what kind of life would it be? Even a critic will probably answer that the highest we could conceive for God in that situation would be that

> He should live as Christ lived. If the throne of the Universe were to become vacant and we were asked what type of spirit should be found in the new Being destined to rule, what would we say? What could we say except to answer that we desired the Christlike spirit in the Ruler of all things?[5]

Granted that many people may not accept this interpretation of Jesus' teaching and Jesus' personality. It is an evident fact of history that for millions of human beings Jesus has been more than a teacher, more than an example, more than a source of spiritual inspiration. He has also been a convincing revelation of God Himself. As one of Jesus' earliest interpreters phrased it, "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

The second point is this. For unnumbered people Jesus has been literally a Saviour. These individuals may have differed in their thought of how Jesus saved them and what it

[5] Bishop Francis E. McConnell.

was He saved them from. But from all these lives comes an essentially similar confession—"Christ, the power of God unto salvation." Here, apparently, was one of the distinctive notes in the preaching of the first Christians. Their Master was more than a splendid character and a great sage. He was a Saviour from those powers—inner and outer—that men feared most. Listen, for example, to the reply made in the second century to one of the most bitter critics of the new religion. Origen is speaking for the Christians:

> The work of Jesus reveals itself among all mankind where communities of God founded by Jesus exist. They are composed of men reclaimed from a thousand vices, and to this day the name of Jesus can produce a marvelous meekness of spirit and a complete change in character in those who have honestly accepted the teaching concerning God and Christ.

Through all the writings of the early Church we catch this same note. Christianity was offering the world more than a Teacher. It

was offering a Saviour. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

In our own time numberless people still find this saving power in Jesus. His teaching, His example, the thought of His love unto death, the power of His living personality give them the extra moral impetus they need, and enable them to break old habits and rise victorious over old temptations. Psychological study may reveal to us the exact processes by which human nature is thus remade, and the exact stimuli which initiate these spiritual transformations. But in our satisfaction in discovering the mechanics of the process, let us not forget that the process is a reality and that it is continually going on in unsuspected quarters. Consider, for example, the famous confession of Tolstoi. "Five years ago I came to believe in Christ's teaching, and my life suddenly changed. I ceased desiring what I had wished before, and I began to desire what I had never wanted previously. What formerly

had seemed good now appeared bad, and what had seemed bad now appeared good. The direction of my life and my desires shifted. Good and bad changed places." [6] Granted that there are many people who have never experienced such a transformation of outlook and purpose. The fact that there are such "once-born men" must not blind us to the equally obvious fact that there are also "twice-born men." Jesus did more than show good people a way to be better. He gave innumerable bad people the desire to be good, and the power to start. That was profoundly true in the first century. It is equally true to-day. Jesus has been what the Church has always called Him—the Saviour of the world.

The more we think about Jesus and His place in life the clearer one fact becomes. He was God's supreme gift to men. He has done more for humanity and meant more to humanity than any other figure in history. Our debt to Him can never be paid.

[6] Leo Tolstoi, *My Religion.*

Chapter VI

THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE MODERN CHURCH

I

One of the most brilliant men New England produced a century and a quarter ago was Timothy Dwight, president of Yale University from 1795 to 1817. In addition to his achievements as an educator, he won fame as a preacher and author. Here are the satirical lines he wrote about some of the lazy clergymen of his day. He gives the verse the stinging title, "The Smooth Divine."

Each week he paid his visitation dues,
Coaxed, jested, laughed, rehearsed the private news,
Smoked with each goody, thought her cheese excelled,
Her pipe he lighted and her baby held.
Or placed in some great town, with lacquered shoes,
Trim wig and trimmer gown and glistening hose,
At rich men's jests he laughed, their stories praised,
And at their wives' new patterns gazed and gazed.

Most daintily on pampered turkeys dined,
Nor shrank with fasting nor with study pined:
"Let fools," he cried, "slave on, while prudent I
Snug in my nest shall live, and snug shall die."

Many people to-day have that conception of the ministry and the Church. Let a promising lad become a minister? Not much! The ministry means, so the critics whisper, nothing more than visiting aged females, toadying to rich contributors, and compiling weekly essays on the minor virtues. Support the local church? Certainly not! What intelligent person, the critics sneer, would waste good money on a defunct enterprise? One of our essayists has recently published these bitter gibes about organized Christianity:

> Most of my acquaintances have no religion. That is, they never dream of going to church. A few of them whose businesses keep them in small communities do break this rule, but they go to church for the same reason politicians kiss babies and salesladies wear high heels. It is to show they are regular fellows. Apart from

> this inglorious need of placating the herd-instinct of their community, they willingly disclose their indifference to religion. They associate it with flaccid men and with women who wear birds in their hats. All the hypocrisy of small-beer, brown-stone existence, all the droning dreariness of men dressed like undertakers, they identify with the church from which they have fled. Once they outgrew the subordinations of youth, they spontaneously and joyously cast religion aside.[1]

What is the mistake these extremists make? They are judging the Church as a whole by its worst individual representatives. Finding a lazy and ineffective clergyman, they promptly jump to the conclusion that all ministers are of that type. Seeing a small and unsuccessful church in a suburban town, they ascribe its obvious weaknesses to all churches everywhere. Have you ever realized what strange conclusions would follow if we employed this

[1] Francis Hackett.

procedure in studying other fields of human effort and other professions? Turn to the business world, for example. On the corner of your street there is a wretched little store, dingy and out of repair. The unkempt proprietor makes a scanty living peddling indigestible candy, impossible cigars, and dubious literature. Youthful critics gaze at him and his establishment and then say in fine scorn, "What an enterprise that is! Typical of modern business, of course. Imagine giving one's life to a career like that!" Or in a disreputable block in the poorer section of your city there are the offices of medical charlatans who prey on the credulity of ignorant immigrants. Recently the Department of Public Health in New York published a list of some fifty of the health fakers now doing business in the poorer sections of the city. Listen to the strange titles. "The Chromopaths, the Naprapaths, the Sani-Practors, and the Leonic Healers." With them the exponents of "Aero-therapy, Auto-thermy, Geo-therapy, Irido-therapy, Zonet-therapy, and Biodynamic-Chromatic

Therapeutics." Our critical friends gaze at the names on those office doors and then turn away in disgust. "There," they exclaim, "is the medical profession! A deliberate fraud! What sensible young man would dream of choosing a career like that?" If we heard such stupid generalizations we would protest. "No," we would say indignantly, "you must not judge these professions and these undertakings by their worst products. That cornerstore is not typical of modern business. These charlatans are not representatives of modern medicine. Remember that there are fine men in medicine and business, as well as vicious ones. Remember that there are great mercantile establishments and splendid hospitals as well as the disreputable institutions you are criticizing so bitterly. Judge business and medicine by their best representatives, not by their worst."

This is what we say about the modern Church and the modern ministry. There are aggressive and intelligent ministers as well as lazy ones. There are strong and effective

churches as well as weak ones. Young people must judge organized Christianity by its best representatives, not by its worst. They certainly must not generalize on the basis of unfortunate local situations.

II

Suppose we turn now to some of the religious leaders and the significant Christian enterprises of our time. What do we find? We find men and undertakings that challenge the finest qualities in the heart of youth. A generation ago, for example, one of the ablest young men of Germany gave up a career in literature and music to fit himself to establish a medical mission in one of the neediest sections of Africa. There he has been at work for the last few years, performing operations by day and at night writing the letters that raise the funds to keep his hospital going. Here are a few sentences from one of those letters:

> The operation is finished, and in the dim light I watch for the sick man's

awakening. Scarcely has he recovered consciousness when he stares about him and cries again and again, "No more pain! No more pain!" His hand reaches out for mine and will not let it go. Then we talk, and I explain to him that it is the Lord Jesus who told me to come to Africa, and that the white people in Europe are giving the money to keep me there and help cure sick negroes. The sun streams down through the coffee-bushes into the dark shed, and there we sit side by side—the white doctor and the black patient. And out of our own hard experience we begin to understand the old words: "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."[3]

No trace of laziness or hypocrisy or ineffectiveness there. No one would call that missionary-doctor a "smooth divine." There is the Christian ministry at its best.

Or turn to an out-of-the-way corner of our own land. Many young people have the idea

[3] Albert Schweitzer.

that the rural church in America is a dismal failure, and that country ministers are a stupid and reactionary group. But is it fair to make these sweeping generalizations, these universal indictments? Some years ago a small village grew up around a railroad junction in rural Wisconsin. Most of the people there were railroad employees, the rest farmers. In the course of time a store, a school, and a community church appeared, and the future of the community seemed highly promising. Then one day came the unexpected announcement that the railroad planned to relocate its lines, and that this junction would presently be abandoned. Immediately preparations for a general exodus began. The pessimists of the community announced that the store would close, the school would close, the church would close, and property would speedily become worthless. Who saved the situation? The country minister. He entered into hurried negotiations with the manager of a distant canning establishment and persuaded him to locate his proposed pickle factory in this com-

munity on condition that the farmers there would agree to begin raising cucumbers in quantity. The minister called his discouraged parishioners together, announced the good news, and enlisted the support of everyone in the new community venture. Then to guarantee the future of the village, he took over the little store, reorganized it as a coöperative enterprise, and sold stock in it to everyone in the vicinity. The Church a dismal failure? The ministry the least interesting and least valuable of the professions? Remember that there are two types of ministers and two kinds of churches. Judge organized Christianity by its best representatives and not by its worst.

III

As we study the better men and the more progressive churches of our day we note two distinctly encouraging developments. The first is that these men and these churches are quietly dropping the futile religious controversies of an earlier day. At this particular time, when some of our largest denominations

are bitterly divided over certain issues, it is hard for outsiders—particularly young people who are somewhat hasty in their judgments—to realize what an advance has actually been made in tolerance and friendliness and what we might call religious common sense. But if we look back a century or more we see undoubted evidence that conditions in the Church are growing better and not worse.

Consider, for example, the extraordinary sectarian bitterness of early American life. At the beginning of the eighteenth century a few Episcopalians located in Congregational Boston, and naturally attempted to build a church of their own. The descendants of the Puritans blocked them at every turn. Property owners were incited not to sell land unless an agreement was made that no Episcopal church would be built upon it, and even a man as eminent and wise as Cotton Mather wrote quietly in his diary, "I would consult with some of the ministers of this neighborhood as to the best method of encountering the folly of unreasonable bigots." This spirit of sectarian bit-

erness persisted for decades. Any Episcopal innovation, such as the practice of wearing a pulpit gown, was furiously opposed by members of the non-liturgical churches. We still possess a letter written by a young girl who was visiting in Boston at the time of the Revolution. Her uncle and aunt—Congregationalists of the strictest type—naturally took her to church with them on Sunday. To the horror of all three, the ministers who conducted the service brazenly appeared in gowns. That night the girl wrote home in distress to her mother:

> Dr. Pemberton and Dr. Cooper had on gowns. In the form of the Episcopal cassock, we hear. These Doctors design to distinguish themselves from the inferior clergy by these habits, and they do it too at a time when the good people of New England are threatened with the coming of an Episcopal bishop. Aunt says that when she saw Dr. Pemberton roll up the pulpit steps, there occurred to her mind the figure of Parson Trulliber, recorded

by Mr. Fielding in his story. She says she is really sorry any Congregational divine should give her so unpleasing an idea. Uncle says that both Dr. Pemberton and Dr. Cooper had popes hidden in their bellies.

One who reads between the lines in that letter can picture the consternation and bitterness in Boston Congregationalism on that memorable Sunday a century and a half ago. Granted that some modern churches are still divided over unfortunate issues. Has there not been since Revolutionary days an appreciable gain in tolerance and good sense?

Or consider the theological and personal wrangles of the past. About the time that pulpit gowns were making such a stir in Boston, a scurrilous pamphlet entitled "An Old Fox Tarred and Feathered" appeared in England. It was written by one prominent clergyman and directed against another. Who was the man whom someone wanted to tar and feather? It was John Wesley, who for dec-

ades had been doing more than anyone else to deepen the religious life of England. Who was it who wanted to administer the tar and feathers? It was Augustus Toplady, whose hymn we so often sing, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me." Granted that there is much theological and personal bitterness between certain groups in the modern Church. We have at least advanced beyond the stage of physical violence. Even the most vigorous of our present controversialists make no appeal for tar and feathers. Quarrels over ritual and ceremony? The precise form of the rite of baptism may still be a subject for bitter dispute in certain circles, but the intense animosities of a few decades ago seem to be definitely on the wane. A century ago the quarrel over infant baptism was bewildering American Protestantism. Vigorous sermons, pro and con, were being preached, and vindicative pamphlets were being issued by the score. One of these pamphlets, fortunately preserved in a theological library of to-day, indicates that the author had lost his sense of humor as well

as his patience. On the front page we read the astonishing title: "Antipedobaptism Defended, or Total Immersion in a Nutshell." Surely we have made progress since those days. Surely it is a sign of advance to find these old disputes losing their bitterness or vanishing entirely, and to find the churches of our time —whatever their creed or denominational affiliation—singing hymns like this:

> Where cross the crowded ways of life,
> Where sound the cries of race and clan,
> Above the noise of selfish strife
> We hear Thy voice, O Son of Man!

The second encouraging development we see in the better churches of our time is the new and the determined effort to unite the Christian forces of the community in the interests of more effective practical service. In some localities this effort results in the formation of a vigorous Federation of Churches, or a highly valuable Ministers' Association. In other communities, separate religious organizations are actually being united and new churches—to all intents and purposes inter-

denominational or non-sectarian bodies—are appearing. The average outsider, recalling from his youth stories of denominational warfare and forgetting how much has happened in the religious world in recent years, is apt to overlook these developments. Again and again we hear such persons describing the situation that existed a generation ago and implying that the same situation still exists. Would that such belated critics could wake up to the fact that recent progress in the Church has been quite as extensive and encouraging as recent progress in business, education, law, and medicine!

Consider, for example, a typical instance of church federation recently reported by the Home Missions Council:

> In a certain rural community in Ohio, two tiny churches had disputed the field for years. One was a Presbyterian Church with 42 members, and the other a Methodist Church with 85 members. The Presbyterians could not raise enough

money to hire a preacher at all, and the Methodists could afford a minister only every other Sunday afternoon. There was, therefore, no resident clergyman in the little town, and its religious life had sunk to a low ebb. What finally happened? As the older members of both churches, denominationalists of the most extreme type, died off, the younger element in the community became strong enough to plan to change the entire situation. Eventually these young people canvassed the families of the section, secured pledges for $1900 per year toward a minister's salary, united the two tiny churches, tore down the Presbyterian structure to make room for the new parsonage, and then rallied everyone in the Methodist building to hear the new, full-time, resident preacher.

Changes like these are going on, quietly and unobserved, in hundreds of small American communities. There is every likelihood that the movement for the federation of small

churches will grow in vigor and extent in the years ahead. Why do we make that prophecy? Because the younger generation has lost interest in denominational differences and has begun to feel that the real task of the Church is to serve the community effectively rather than make hectic efforts to preserve the sectarian and ecclesiastical *status quo*. As this younger generation comes into control, the impulse for church coöperation, church federation, and organic church unity will grow steadily stronger.

But the present movement for the union and the reorganization of churches is not limited to rural districts and small communities. You find the same spirit abroad in cities. Granted that there are serious difficulties involved in the work of bringing together city churches that possess a large membership, highly valued traditions, and (this is often the major difficulty) a great amount of property. Year by year such mergers do take place, and more and more people become convinced that a few strong churches can meet the needs of a modern

city more effectively than a great many weak ones. One of the most encouraging indications of the new spirit abroad in the Church is the appeal now being made by dozens of individuals and research groups for the reunion and reorganization of Protestant forces in our larger centers of population. Mention was made in an earlier chapter of the recent survey of the Protestant churches of Springfield, Massachusetts. What conditions did the survey reveal, and what was the final appeal made by the group that conducted the study?

The Protestant and the Catholic constituencies of Springfield are approximately equal in size. The Catholic group maintains 15 churches. The Protestant group is trying to maintain 43 regularly organized churches and 19 smaller congregations—a total of 62 ecclesiastical units. Twenty-one of the 43 regularly organized churches had in 1922 a membership of less than 350, and 25 of the 39 ministers who reported their salary admitted they received less than $2500 per year. This

amount, on the basis of the wage-scale of 1922 (the year of the survey), was less than the annual income of a good mechanic. The average total attendance on Sunday morning for all the 39 Protestant churches that reported was 8,200—an average per church of 210. At a single Catholic church in the city, the successive Sunday morning masses attracted over 6,000 people each week—a group 75% as great as the one all the 39 Protestant churches together suceeded in attracting on Sunday morning. The total adult Protestant constituency of the city (over sixteen years of age) was estimated to be 41,000. Of these only 17,000 were enrolled as members in all the 43 regularly organized Protestant churches of the city combined, and the attendance records showed that of these 17,000 members, less than 10,000 attended church services with any regularity. The city as a whole had grown in size 117% since 1900, but the Protestant churches had grown only 64%, and the Protestant Sunday Schools only 37%. These Sunday Schools, tragically enough, had been losing steadily in

size (absolutely as well as relatively) since 1915. Though Springfield had increased in population between 1915 and 1922 from 103,000 to 135,000, there were fewer children enrolled in the Protestant Sunday Schools of the city in 1922 than there were in 1915.

Face to face with these facts, what was the final appeal of the experts who conducted the survey?

> Springfield Protestantism is a relatively large and impressive business which, however, yields a very narrow margin of profit. At any given time during the last twenty years, fully one-fourth of the Protestant Churches of the city reported no growth. The slenderness of the success of the other three-fourths is measured by the fact that for every 10 members they gained, they eventually lost 7 (by death, removal, or revision of the roll), leaving a net gain of only 3. On the basis of objective and verified facts, the best interpretation we can put upon the Springfield

> situation is that Protestantism there has only a fighting chance. This chance is conditional on coöperation. Without coöperation in some form—effective, working coöperation with science to guide churchmanship and organization to effect the common purpose—it is safe to say that Springfield Protestantism, as ecclesiastically organized, will be a permanently defeated movement within another twenty-five years.[3]

Granted that the situation, not only in this one city, but in scores of similar communities throughout America, is a serious one. We can take definite encouragement from the fact that innumerable people are recognizing the danger, pointing out the sources of our weakness, and pleading as never before for the reunion and reorganization of Protestantism. The developments of the next few decades? Some of us are convinced that the new generation, already impatient with the ineffective sectarianism of the past, will change the present

[3] H. Paul Douglass, *The Springfield Church Survey.*

ecclesiastical situation far more rapidly and far more effectively than many faint-hearted people imagine, and lay the foundations of the new and finer Church of to-morrow. The ministry not a man's job? Look at the other careers opening before the young men of promise—business, law, medicine, teaching. If a young man has a life-ideal higher than that of mere money-making, where can he find in the America of to-day an opportunity comparable to that offered by the Church? Standing between an old world and a new one, and recognizing at last the sources of its weakness in the past, the Church waits for new and intelligent and aggressive leadership. What a chance for the finest and keenest young men of to-day!

IV

What are the chief tasks confronting these new churches of to-morrow? What is the work they must do in the years just ahead? In these chapters we have discussed the need for the reinterpretation and restatement of the Chris-

tian message, and the need for the reorganization of the Christian Church. In closing let us glance at three other responsibilities devolving on the new Church of the new age.

First: Some organization must create a new spirit of friendship, tolerance, and good will between the different groups now trying to live together and work together in the American communities of our time. During the War the owner of a Pennsylvania worsted mill decided to find out how many different nationalities had had a share in the making of the large American flags he was shipping from the mill day after day. Here is the result of his investigation. The flags were made of wool from American sheep. The wool (or later the flag) was:

Sorted by an American
Carded by an Italian
Spun by a Swede
Warped by a German
Dressed by an Englishman
Drawn in by a Scotchman
Woven by a Belgian
Inspected by a Frenchman

Scoured by an Albanian
Dyed by a Turk
Pressed by a Polander
Examined by an Irishman.

There is the American flag of to-day, and there is the American community of to-day. All these races are trying to live together, work together, and build together the America of to-morrow in which their children will inevitably find a common destiny. But these racial contacts, exemplified by that Pennsylvania mill, are only the beginning of our group problem. Every one of the nationalities mentioned in the list above belonged to the white race. What would have happened in the mill had the owner attempted to bring in workers of another color? In that mill vigorous discussions of religious differences were prohibited. What would have happened had there been a further division of the employees on the familiar basis of Catholic, Protestant, and Jew? Here you begin to see one of our American problems in all its complexity. Somehow or other we must teach the members of these

different races, these different colors, these different creeds to live together as friends and Americans all. What an opportunity for a church that dares to speak out bravely for tolerance, coöperation, good will, and begins to break down these walls of division in American life by actually crossing them! Other organizations in our national life are attempting this work. The public schools, the granges and welfare societies, the Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A.—where are the new leaders who will show the Church how to carry on its share in this widespread ministry of reconciliation?

Second: Some organization must help men and women conquer the evil within their own hearts. You say there is no evil there? Within us all are impulses, instincts, emotions that were bred into our human nature by millions of years of sub-human evolution. Once these animal traits were of the greatest value. Time and again they warned our far-off ancestors of danger, strengthened them for battle, gave

them enough descendants to guarantee the survival of the species or the primitive human group. But now these inherited instincts find themselves in a new social environment. They must be controlled and redirected, or their fierce animal energy will bring disaster on us and on our civilization. Fear, anger, greed, vindicativeness, physical instincts even more familiar to us all—every one of them must be mastered, or together they will gain a tragic mastery over us.

> Long ago Plato confessed that he was trying to drive two horses, one white and tractable, the other black and vicious. Long ago Jesus reminded men that two powers are forever struggling for the mastery in the human soul. One He called God, the other Mammon. Long ago Paul was obliged to say, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway." And in our own time Stevenson has pictured for us the

two men found inside every human heart
—Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.[4]

Here is one of the perennial problems of human life, a problem that promises to be with us as long in the future as it has been in the past. What an opportunity for the Church of to-morrow, blessed with the new psychological knowledge scientific study is revealing! To take the facts and the principles modern psychology has discovered, combine them with the great truths Christianity has always been trying to teach, and then reveal to men and women a new and an effective way to master themselves and achieve a happy and a disciplined life—where can you find a more inspiring opportunity than that?

But all the evil does not stay inside human lives. These inherited and now dangerous tendencies build themselves up into a veritable Kingdom of Evil that is forever dragging human lives down into frustration and misery. What are the slums of any American city but outposts of this sinister Kingdom? There you

[4] Harry Emerson Fosdick.

see greed and cruelty and animal passion incarnated in vicious institutions which year by year sweep unnumbered children toward a life of wretchedness. This editorial from one of the New York weeklies in the spring of 1924 tells its own story:

> The nine-days'-wonder of New York City this spring has been the so-called bob-haired bandit, a young girl who held up a series of small stores in Brooklyn and escaped in each case with the contents of the till. She was eventually captured, of course, and proved to be a girl of only twenty. What was the environment out of which she had come? Her father was a habitual drunkard, and her mother an indifferent creature who left her brood of children either to starve or else beg food from one of the other families in the tenement. This girl was the youngest of eight children. At the age of fifteen she was working in a factory and had begun the practice of spending the evening with disreputable men and boys she picked up

on the street. Her twenty years of life had been years of cold and hunger, of living in cellars, of being kept alive by charity. It is no wonder that such an environment developed in her the determination to pursue a life of crime. The wonder is that any of the children who are brought up in these surroundings ever stay decent. That girl is a product of the modern city —with its neglect and its carelessness, its indifference and its selfishness, its vast undercurrents of human misery.[5]

For centuries the Church has been working, in various ways and with varying degrees of effectiveness, to overthrow this vicious Kingdom of Evil. Granted that the Church has made many mistakes, and has often shown a tragic apathy and weakness in the face of pressing social problems. At the same time, is there any other institution which—when all is said—has done so much for nineteen centuries to lift the burden of sin and suffering, help men and women and children toward a

[5] *The New Republic.*

happier life, and fight the growth of those institutions which threaten to warp and ruin personality? In our time a hundred secular agencies have taken up the battle against the Kingdom of Evil. The Church must work with them, taking an ever larger and ever more aggressive part in the struggle.

Third: Some organization must, in the years just before us, lay the foundations for a just and enduring world-peace. Wherever we turn among the colleges of to-day we find reminders of a student generation swept away to sudden death. On the library walls in our American colleges stand the names of the soldier dead. Over those names we read the old, sad words: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." We visit English universities, find there lists of the dead just as tragic and far longer, and above those lists we read the same words of Jesus. Then we turn to the universities of Germany, find in the halls there the names of German student-dead, and above

the long lists read in German a verse that makes us suddenly silent: "Greater love hath no man than this. . . ." Do you know how many of the young men of Europe gave their lives in this last war? Suppose we could gather them together again from their graves on a thousand battlefields. Suppose they could march, a grim parade of ghosts, along some broad avenue while you and I stood watching. Twenty at a time, dawn to sunset, not a break in the line. First the dead of Britain. All day they march—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Ten days for the British dead to pass in review. Then the dead of France. Twenty at a time, dawn to sunset, not a break in the line. Eleven days for the French dead to pass. Then the dead of Russia. Once brave, strapping youths from the hills of Siberia and the plains of eastern Europe. Now thin, wavering ghosts, marching by in silence. Twenty at a time, dawn to sunset, not a break in the line. Thirty-five days for the Russian dead to pass. Then the dead of Germany and her allies. After all, these

young men were tired of fighting. They wanted to get home, just as the others did. Now ghosts, marching twenty at a time, dawn to sunset, not a break in the line. Forty-two days for the German dead to pass. If that parade of dead began to-morrow at sunrise, it would take more than three months for the ghosts to file by. That is what this last war cost the younger generation. Their children must not be asked to pay such a price again.

Wherever we turn in the world to-day we find men yearning for the end of war. To the Church of Christ there seems to come a great cry like the voice of God Himself: "To you I have revealed my truth. Through you my power streams into unnumbered lives. On you, more than on any other institution, I lay the task of building a world of friendliness and peace. Go forward, in the strength and the wisdom that I will give, and bring my Kingdom." How can the Church neglect a challenge like that?

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